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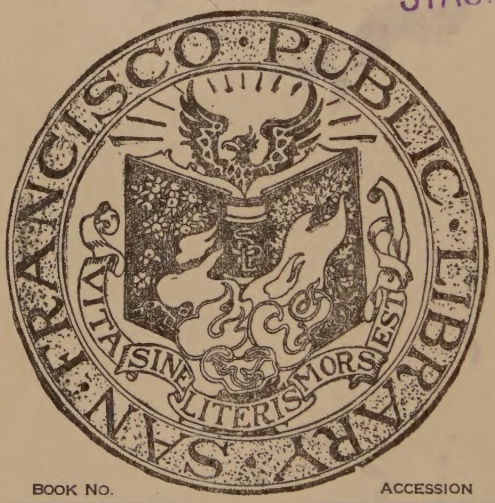

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THE WRITINGS OF

ALFRED DE MUSSET

COMPLETE IN TEN VOLUMES

The Complete Writings of
ALFRED DE MUSSET

ROLLA · NOVELS IN VERSE · SILVIA
STORIES IN VERSE · THE NIGHTS
SIMONE

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY

GEORGE SANTAYANA
EMILY SHAW FORMAN
MARIE AGATHE CLARKE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

M. BIDA · HENRI PILLE

VOLUME TWO

REVISED EDITION

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EDWIN PRESS

POEMS OF ALFRED DE MUSSET

ROLLA

I

Do you regret the age when, in majestic grace,
Fair heaven amid the gods made earth her dwelling-place;
When Venus Astarté, child of the mighty sea,
Rose from the bitter wave in virgin purity?
The time, when drifting nymphs lay on the river's breast,
And with their wanton laughter vexed the lazy rest
Of fauns stretched out to sleep upon the reedy shore?
When in the pool Narcissus his fair image saw,
And when great Hercules eternal justice dealt,
Clad in his gory mantle of a lion's pelt;
When mocking satyrs swayed the leafy boughs among,
Whistling a jeering echo to the trav'ler's song?

When all things were divine, even to human ills,
And fickle earth adored, where now she spurns
and kills;
When all on earth knew joy, surpassing words
to tell—
All save Prometheus—who, deeply sinning, fell?

And when—oh, monstrous change!—the earth
became the tomb
Of all man's pristine glory, all his primal bloom,
And northern hurricane, with devastating
breath,
Across Rome's ruins spread her winding-sheet of
death.
Would you restore the time when weary earth
emerged
From barbarism's curse, all newly cleansed and
purged,
Into a golden age of fair fertility,
And found again her long-lost juvenility?
Or sigh you for that age when our romances old,
First in the realms of earth, unfurled their wings
of gold;
When all our monuments, and acts of faith and
truth,
Wore still the virgin garb of pure and spotless
youth;
When holy Jesus died that men might live again,
And earth was raised anew from depths of sin
and pain;

When from o'er palace tow'r, or monastery wall,
Sign of eternal love, Christ's cross shone over all?
When Strasburg and Cologne, St. Peter's, Notre Dame,
Embodiments of faith, in their majestic calm
Intoned the Gloria of centuries new-born;
When famous deeds of hist'ry were conceived and done;
When Life was fresh and young as early spring,
And Death, by Faith made fair, knew not its sting?

O Christ; I am not one of those who bend in prayer
Within the solemn sanctu'ry of thy temples fair,
Kissing thy holy cross, and lifting pleading eyes
Up to thy peaceful Heav'n, beyond the azure skies;
Unbent I stand beneath the shadow of those walls,
Where humbly on his knees the true believer falls,
While murmurs, like the winds along a reedy shore,
Arise from trembling lips that worship and adore!
I am not one, O Christ, who dwells within thy fold;
Too late have I set foot within a world too old.

The earth has long outgrown her superstitious
youth,
And sought and found the things of a material
truth,
And 'mid the ruined temples of long-vanished
days
The phantom of her Faith in veiled silence stays.
Now wakes the human race from vain imagin-
ings,
And sees the hand of chance impelling earthly
things;
And Jesus Christ, twice crucified and killed of
men,
From out his tomb divine issues not forth again.

Oh, thou, whose simple faith is pure and unde-
filed,
And who of Heav'n art still the loving, trustful
child,
Cling to thy holy symbols, cast them not away,
Nor grasp the impious creeds of this unfaithful
day.
Weep o'er the tomb of him who died the world
to save,
And on thy bended knees His tender mercy
crave.
For in this fallen age, who is there that would
give
His blood that man might drink, and turn from
death and live?

Within his awful tomb, with pale and livid brow,
Once more lies Lazarus—ah, who will raise him now!
What profits it to-day that, moved by heavenly zeal,
Clad in his rags, St. Paul did to old Rome appeal,
Reclaiming heathen souls, lifting a nation high
Out of the filth of crime and black debauchery?
Where now the perfumes rare of fallen Magdalen;
Where now the heavenly voice, once heard of doubting men;
About whose head plays now the fiery aureole;
Where now the ardent fire faith kindled in each soul?
Gone are they all! Oh, world, to thee again have come,
In filthy habit dressed, the days of ancient Rome!
And Hope, once fruitful, lies with weary, shrunken breast,
And takes in sad sterility her meed of rest.

II

In Paris, of the world that most notorious town
Of viciousness and sin, Jacques Rolla wore the crown.
A gambler in the lowest dens of crime and infamy,
To noble impulses quite dead and lost was he.

Alone on Rolla's life dark passions held their sway,
Nor did he strive to check those passions' wilful play;
Nay, more: as one who muses by a running stream,
He smiling watched their course as in a changing dream.
His father, senile, weak, but of a noble birth,
A spendthrift, most unreasoning and nothing worth,
Reared Rolla in the false belief that one day he
Would be the heir to wealth and golden luxury.
And when, at nineteen years, Jacques, by his father's death,
Became untrammeled master of his every breath,
He, having learned no craft, profession, business, art,
Lived on in luxury, nor strove with temp'rate hand
To hoard the meager fortune left at his command.

'Tis said that Hercules, in weariness one day
Of endless toil, sat down where two paths forked away;
From one, fair Virtue stretched to him her snowy arms,
While from the other Pleasure lured him with her charms.

He followed Virtue; but to-day are vanished quite
The paths where trod those nymphs with footsteps fleet and light.
Betwixt the two, now lost 'neath weeds and mosses gray,
The ages, as they passed, have worn a broad highway.

As, in approaching a great town, the trav'ler sees
First of the city's life, its vilest dregs and lees,
So Youth, on entering life, greets first its darkest side,
Nor sees the halls of gold where Purity doth bide.
By him fair modesty in foul corruption veiled,
In accents of delight is passionately hailed.
And men receive him not, until the mighty sword,
That blade which, fired in heaven, was given him by God
To guard his inmost soul from sin's most dread attack,
Dragged in the filth of crime, is tarnished, foul, and black.
Thus was't with Jacques, a youth of much intrinsic worth,
Whose better, nobler parts were strangled at their birth;

In boldness and in haughtiness he walked the world,
And customs and conventions to the winds he hurled.

Making three separate purses of his fortune small,
For each a year he gave, then vowed to end it all;
Nor did he myst'ry make of this, his dread intent,
But openly his gold in wildest pleasure spent.
And the world, smiling, cynical, and wise,
Beheld him run his course, nor, seeing, felt surprise.

Ah, Rolla! in thy armor dressed, of haughty pride,
Who all life's truest worth thus blindly cast aside,
For Happiness you sought amid the ways of ruth,
Nor grasped her as she passed along the path of Truth.
Like the wild desert mare, who, starved and famishing,
Seeks madly on the plain the brackish, putrid spring,
Wert thou. At last, despairing and with bitter cries,
Amid the burning sands in agony she dies:

Nor sees the laden caravans that pass her by,
Bound for a fertile land, beneath a cloud-flecked sky,
Where earth by gushing wells and blooming fields is blest,
Whither, but humbly following, she had found rest.
Out of what clay, O God, what strange, unwholesome dust,
Didst fashion him who spurns his honest share of trust;
Who from his duty's call doth ever swiftly flee,
Who finds in wealth alone unlicensed liberty?

III

Is it upon a form of marble, or of snow,
That yon dim, golden lamp doth shed its wav'ring glow,
Making the tender azure of the draperies
To shimmer like the leaves on waving aspen trees?
Ah, no; snow is more pale, and marble far less white;
'Tis a fair, sleeping child that meets the won'dring sight;
And lighter than the sigh of sea-weeds bending low
Beneath the ardent kiss of gentle winds that blow,

Is the soft, childish sigh that from the maiden's lips
Ofttimes, in sweet unconsciousness, all trembling slips.

It is a child who lies beneath those draperies' sheen,
Not yet a woman grown—a maid of scarce fifteen.
Fair is her immature and slender, girlish grace;
Love in her youthful heart has not yet found a place.
She sleeps, while round her falls her long, luxuriant hair,
Covering as with a cloak her tender beauty rare;
And close within her hand's weak and unstable hold
Is clasped the cross suspended from a chain of gold,
As if to prove that she had humbly knelt to pray
Ere on her maiden couch thus slumbering she lay.
She sleeps, and oh, behold that noble, candid brow!
Pure as a limpid wave, white as the driven snow.
She sleeps. Ah, does not night make her fair form more fair?
Do not the softened lights that 'round her gently stir,

Throw an enchanted glamour o'er her loveliness,
As though dark Night bent down with flut'ring robe to press
Upon her sleeping form a lingering, light caress?

The tread of priest beneath the monastery wall
No purer sentiments to human heart could call,
O virgin, than the sound of thy soft, fitful sigh,
That gently comes and goes, as in deep sleep you lie.
Behold this chamber, fresh with air of purity!
Here stands in perfumed bloom a verdant orange-tree;
There, books, embroidery; yonder, a branch of palm
Drops on an ancient crucifix its holy balm.
The spinning-wheel of Marguerite might fitly be
Sought in this maid'nly room of spotless purity.
Is it not true that Innocence, all fresh and undefiled,
Blesses the peaceful rest of a fair, sleeping child;
And Beauty, bending low on white, seraphic wings,
Guards its pure, tender soul, from foul and evil things?
Is it not true that Love, when in the maiden's breast
With veiled glance, downcast, he pauses first to rest,

Wears on his head a crown of pure, celestial light?
An angel form is he, all wonderously bright!

What woman is't who sits beside you maiden fair?
Is it your mother kind, who gently watches there,
And who the clock's swift hands consults with anxious eyes—
Who shakes her head to note, with fear, how fast time flies?
What waits she for so late—your father, gentle one?
Ah, no; your father, child, has long been dead and gone.
For whom that table spread, with steaming food and wine?
Who, at this hour late, is coming here to dine?
Whoe'er it be, you sleep, nor watch for him, Marie.
You sleep, and fair your dreams, and white as purity.
Too young your tender heart, even in dreams, to know
One am'rous thought, one kiss, or feel Love's burning glow.
How comes it, then, O child, so innocent and fair,
That the bleak rains of night have drenched thy heavy hair?

Where wandered you beneath the black and
low'ring sky?
From perils of the night children like you should
fly.
Hark! on the silence breaks the sound of laughter
wild;
Will it not wake from dreams the lovely, sleep-
ing child?
Ah, shame! A stranger hand the chamber-door
has burst—
Oh, shield those girlish eyes from yonder sight
accurst!
A most revolting scene the doorway doth re-
veal—
Women, disheveled, drunk, who down the pas-
sage reel!
Look down the corridor to yonder distant room:
See the disordered feast spread in the deep'ning
gloom!
Once more, 'mid moving lights that passing wax
and wane,
That laughter shrill! A door is closed! Silence
again.

Was it a horrid dream, fantastic, hideous, wild,
That threw its mantle 'curst about the sleeping
child?
Ah, woman! by her couch watching and waiting
there,
Say, 'tis a rare perfume that bathes thy
daughter's hair?

Say, that the rosy glow tinging her brow's pure white,
Comes from her heart's warm blood, not from chill blasts of night?

Listen! A step resounds upon the cold, dark stone.
A knock is heard; two forms, on which dim lights are thrown,
Approach from out the deep and shadowy gloom. 'Tis thou,
Ah, haggard Rolla, pale, and with disordered brow!

O Faust, on that last night, so agonized, so grim,
When the dark angel bore you to the silence dim,
Did you not utter then your last anathema?
Or, quiv'ring at the sound of sacred chanting, ah,
Did you not wildly strike, in your last blasphemy,
Your hoary head against the walls that sheltered thee?
Upon your livid lips e'en then the poison hung,
And Death, your comrade dark in dreadful works so long,
Passed out with thee upon the black and silent tide,
Into the hopeless night of thy long suicide!

Over what ocean fair, what peaceful cave obscure,
Blows there a breeze so soft, so perfumed, and so pure,
So full of the sweet tears that from spring's eyelids start,
As the first breath of love that stirs a maiden's heart?
O Faust, grown old in sin, such gracious love was thine,
Could it not warm thy soul with passion all divine?
God gave to thee a boon, most holy and serene,
When to thy life he linked a maiden of fifteen.
Fifteen! Oh, age when o'er the verdant tree of life
Blow pleasant winds with rare and balmy perfumes rife!
The age when woman at her first birthday came out
Of God's almighty hand, girded and bound about
With innocence as with a garment fresh and pure!
O Eve, why kept you not that innocence secure?
O foolish Eve, to tear thy golden idol down,
To pluck the bursting bud ere yet the flower was blown!
Alas! should heaven be given back to you once more,

Again, thou wayward one, thou'dst lose it as before;
You know too well, frail child, that elsewhere man adores;
Exiled with him, you'd be to those dark, dooméd shores,
Where, on his throbbing heart, with your last trembling sigh,
You'd comfort him and bless, and, deeply loving, die!

Across young Rolla's brain what melancholy thought
Passed, as his weary eyes the sleeping maiden sought,
Or fiendish whisperings, low-breathed into his ears,
Chilled all his blood and froze his heart with nameless fears?
He knew that by his side, with fingers cold and grim,
Stood Death, his mantle ready to envelop him.
Joy, youth, and fortune—all for him were past and dead,
And hope lay cold beneath the pall himself had spread.
Three years of reckless pleasure, of sensuous delight,
Like to an airy dream, soon, soon would vanish quite,

And as the song of bird that wings its distant way,
Fades into silence with the dawn of coming day.
Ah, solemn night of death, when to the groping soul
God stretches tender hands to lead him to his goal;
When sinners pray, and of forgiveness feel secure;
Who had defamèd thee?—ah, none but Rolla, sure.
He with grim arrogance thus miserably came
To spend this night, his last, within a house of shame.
And she, that wretched child, that creature fragile, slim,
Upon his open grave slept while awaiting him!

Eternal chaos, oh, to prostitute a child.
Were it not better far her form, so fair and mild,
To gash with cruel knives? to wring that neck of snow,
Or mask of burning lime to place upon that brow,
Than make of it the cloak of sin and vice most foul,
Which have their home within the maiden's once pure soul?
Like to a limpid stream, reflecting from afar

Bright flow'rs and waving trees and every passing star,
While hid beneath its waves are slime most black and fell,
Where lurk the pois'nous germs that breed in deepest hell.

And oh, what beauty still shines in her perfect face.
What sweet fruit would have borne that flow'r of radiant grace!
O Poverty, 'tis thou who art the courtesan;
'Tis thou, who for this child a life of shame began;
This maid, whom Greece had cast Diana's altar on.
Behold, she prayed last night, before she laid her down—
Prayed, and to whom, ye gods? 'Tis thou, grim tyrant gray,
To whom on bended knees she must most humbly pray!
'Tis thou, who, whisp'ring in the night-wind wild and bleak,
Low murm'ring to her mother, thus did'st vilely speak:
"Thy daughter is a virgin fair—she may be sold;
A ready market waits her, and for thee much gold."

Ah, for what fate had this poor child been given
bread,
And what malignant stars their fell light round
her shed?
Of some vile creature, haply, she was bred and
born?
But no—behold that brow, fresh as the light of
dawn!
Poor girl! at fifteen years her senses slumberéd,
Nor felt she the disgrace of the vile life she led.
'Twas not the love of gold, but helpless misery,
That urged her on a path from which she might
not flee.
And all she nightly earned from her nefarious
trade
She to her mother gave, to buy their daily bread.

Ah, women of the world, who live so merrily,
Who from all misery and woe quick turning,
swiftly flee,
Do you not pity her, you who with bolts secure
Your daughters' youthful lives, to keep them
fresh and pure?
You, for whose modesty the whole wide world
would vouch,
Yet who would hide a lover 'neath a husband's
couch,
You gild your private amours with poetic light,
Nor deem your hearts less pure, your flippant
souls less white;

And yet the specter Want ne'er stood beside your bed,
And begged a kiss to pay him for a crust of bread.

And thou, my century, oh, tell me, is it true
That all the shameful acts of viciousness you do,
All time has done? Oh, river, flowing swiftly on,
What hideous corpses float your murky breast upon,
Drifting away to silence—and old Earth perceives
How men thus live and die, and murmurs not, nor grieves,
Nor on her way across the vast and trackless sky,
Toward the eternal Father, doth she faster fly,
That humbly she, before the heavenly throne above,
May crave the blessed aid of his all-chast'ning love.
Ah, well, since so it is, arise, fair prostitute;
The pleading voice of Love within thy heart is mute;
Let the wine flow and sparkle, and the evening wind
Rustle your curtains white! Dull care is cast behind.
The night is beautiful. 'Tis I who for it pay.

Let's drink to Love and drunkenness. Come, let's be gay!
Drink, and be happy. Fear? I know him not, nor pain.
Come, let your burning kiss exhale the wine of Spain.
Let's drink to time, to love, to life, to fleeting breath.
Let's drink to gold, to night, to youth, the vine, and—death!

IV

Sleep you content, Voltaire, and does your hideous smile
Flit o'er your fleshless skull in mockery the while?
Your century was too young to read you, so they say;
Our own must please you well—your men are born to-day!
The mighty edifice which your industrious hands
Worked with such zeal to undermine, no longer stands.
'Tis fallen upon us! In its majestic place
No hand shall rear again a temple of such grace.
Death, whom you grimly courted, cynical Voltaire,
Had long to wait for you: time was there to prepare
Your nuptial couch amid the silence of the tomb.

Come you not forth again from that deep, dreadful gloom,
To go alone to some deserted cloister, or
Knock with your bony hands at some old castle door?
What do they tell you there, those silent, dreary walls,
Those altars desolate, on which the sad light falls,
And which your pois'nous breath for all eternity
Hath laid in ruins waste, hath blasted hopelessly?
How fare you, gaunt Voltaire, now that your work is done?
Feel you a thrill of joy as it you brood upon?
If so, I bid you to the feast of good mine host.
Come, join the revelry, thou grim, unlovely ghost!
Rise and come forth to-night, the glare and glitter greet;
Sure some one dines, who'll give the great Commander seat.

Hear you the sighs of those young, fair and full of grace,
Who with dissembled love, heart pressed to heart, embrace?
Youth, beauty, hope, to each her chast'ning charm doth lend,
And, on beholding them, fair heaven should descend

And bless their tender souls with glory from above.
And yet—ah, shame! alas! these children know not love.

Where have they learned those words, so full of holy charm,
Which only in the midst of tears and sacred calm
Fair Pleasure has the right to murmur falt'ringly?
O woman, object strange of joy and misery,
Mysterious altar where, in blasphemy or prayer,
Is made the sacrifice most foul, or wond'rous fair,
Tell me, in what far echo, in what atmosphere,
Dwell they, those nameless words, uttered with smile or tear,
Which, through delirium alone, down countless ages ring,
And which from Love's lips still are fondly issuing?

Oh, sacrilege! no love, and yet two beings rare,
Two hearts as pure as gold, which angel-wings might bear
Unto their God. No love! yet tears, and murm'ring night,
And shiv'ring winds that sigh in the pale moon's soft light,

And the whole quiv'ring world, in Pleasure's
glow grown bright,
And Love's sweet incense choked in heavy, per-
fumed air,
And downcast flasks from which pours wine of
vintage rare—
And kisses numberless, and sweet words lightly
tossed,
Yet Love away, and, in his place, Love's grin-
ning ghost!

Ah, monastery walls, and cloisters pure and calm,
Dark, silent caves, 'tis you who know Love's
holy balm.
It is your cold, gray stones, your altars and your
walls,
On which Love's burning kiss ecstatically falls.
Oh, open wide your hearts, reveal your holy
treasure
To those two children fair, thus seeking sinful
pleasure.
Tell them how many stones must by their knees
be worn,
Ere in their wayward hearts such love as yours
is born.

See you, old Arouet, yon man with vigor blest,
Who covers with his kisses warm that lovely
breast?
To-morrow's light will see his body in the tomb!

Dost envy him his joys? Oh, ancient scoffer, come,
Be calm; no ray of hope now in his breast doth dwell,
For he with eager eyes, Voltaire, hath read thee well.
If incredulity a science is, why, then
Jacques might be classed among the scientific men,
And with no fear or thought of sacrilege, you might
Escort him, cynic, to your dusty tomb, to-night.

Think you that, if withheld by one faint thread of faith,
He thus would come, to-night, to prostitute his death?
His death! Or grant him but the faintest thought that he,
By death, would pass into a place of misery—
Would it not stay his hand, this thought of punishment?
But now, he will not fear, nor turn from his intent:
All smiling, he will raise the woman by his side,
And watch her gliding forth into dark space so wide,
Bearing within her hands, into infinity,
To his dark, reckless heart, the precious golden key.

And this, behold, is your creation, Arouet!
A man can die like this only since yesterday.
When Brutus, from amid the ruins of his fame,
Exclaimed, "O Virtue, thou art but an empty name!"
He blasphemed not. His glory and repute had fled;
His dream had passed; all earthly hope in him was dead.
But when he sat alone and thought on death, his eyes
Sought the unfathomable depths of the vast skies;
Hope breathed from out the azure world he looked toward;
There yet remained to him his altars and his sword.

And what remains to us, oh, ye destroyers fell,
Who have o'erthrown our heaven, and have constructed well
The world, which ye did seek with care to recreate;
And man, whom ye have made anew, what is his fate?
Ah, what a work is yours! how perfect, how sublime!
With wise and cunning hands you've fashioned for all time.

All, all is well—the hills you've razed, the plains
you've cleared;
The world's a barren waste, a desert dry and
seared,
And e'en the tree of life you've leveled to the
ground—
All is most grand; but who can breathe the air
around,
Where strange, bombastic words vibrate and
float afar
On pestilential winds—malignant words they
are;
The very birds of heaven affrighted from them
flee.
Priests holy are no more; dead is hypocrisy;
But virtue, too, is dying, and God to man is
lost,
And man's intelligence to the four winds is
tossed.
The pride of noble birth, of fair ancestral fame,
All are degraded now in haunts of sin and
shame.
Tawdry, corrupted joys inflame the public mind,
While simpler, purer tastes, are left far, far be-
hind;
And, whether rich or poor, of high or low de-
gree,
No man of sense would now a Trappist Father
be.

V

When o'er the silent roofs and spires of the town
The morning sun's first rays came streaming redly down,
Rolla arose and leaned upon the window-sill,
And looked upon the city, calm and slumb'ring still;
Save for the distant rumble of some passing dray,
Naught broke the silence of the newly wakened day.
A group of shabby singers in the square below
Were mumbling well-remembered songs of long ago.
How songs that in past happy times we used to sing,
Strike to the very heart in times of suffering!
Old songs, they bridge for us the chasm of the years;
They bow our weary heads and blind our eyes with tears.
Dark spirit of ruin, say, are these thine anguished sighs?
Angel of memory, are these thy sobs which rise?
Ah, sweet, enchanted strains, flutt'ring like bird above
The distant portals of some happy childish love,

Well know ye how to ope the graves of long ago,
And bury us, ye who once lulled and soothed us so.
When on calm autumn days the golden sun doth rise,
Beneath his steps the world all fresh and radiant lies,
And the fair, silv'ry shoulders of the shiv'ring night
Are bathed in crimson blushes 'neath his rosy light.
And thus, the maiden chaste will shiveringly start
At some sweet thought that comes unbidden to her heart.
King of the world, O Sun, the Earth thy mistress is;
She lulls thee in her arms, and blushes at thy kiss.
With the majestic flame of youth eternal, thou
In everlasting light dost bathe her lovely brow.
Light-wingèd swallows, ye, swift-flying over there,
Will ye not tell me why grim death has drawn so near?
Oh, ghastly suicide! If I had wings, I'd fly
Above the encumb'ring earth, in yon pure, lovely sky.

Ah, tell me, heaven and earth, what is the dawn,
I pray,
In this old universe—what matters one more
day?
Tell me, green swards, I beg, and tell me, flow-
ing seas,
When touched by morning's glow, or tossed by
morning's breeze,
If moved by naught within, what power have
ye, then,
To stir the heart and bend the stubborn knees of
men?
O Earth, who is it to thy Sun has promised
you?
What sing the forest birds? What weeps the
evening dew?
Why come ye now to tell me of thy loves—ah,
why?
What will ye all with me, who am about to die?
Ah, why to Rolla's soul insistently recurred
That one word, " love," that sweet yet dreadful
word?
What wond'rous harmonies, what voice as music
clear,
Came thus to murmur it, when ghastly Death
stood near?

Who dared to speak of love to him, the mori-
bund—
To him, who as an ancient soldier shows a wound,

Pointed with arrant pride at his own rocky heart,
Wherein no smallest flow'r of love had dared to start?
To him, this reprobate, who held his life as naught,
And deemed love merchandise that might be sold or bought!
To him, who had no ties, no mistress, and no home,
And who in open scorn defied what fate might come;
Who with his sacred youth had trifled flippantly,
As toys the wind with a dead leaf beneath a tree;
Who, having drained his glass, came now, at his last hour,
To this vile den, where he his curses might outpour.

When from the nest the eaglet sees his mother fly
Amid the azure depths of the ethereal sky,
Who tells him that he, too, may leave the shelt'ring nest,
Leap into space and soar above the mountain's crest?
How knows he that his wings were made to cleave the skies?
He is an eagle! from the nest he springs, and flies.

As unto lowest life the lowest life gives birth,
So do degraded, abject souls come forth on earth,
Who die amid the mire and filth where they were born,
Leaving behind, in turn, their loathsome, filthy spawn.
To feed her ravens and to fertilize her tombs,
Nature does need these products of their vicious wombs.
But when her noble creatures she does model, lo!
'Neath her deft, careful fingers, they do slowly grow.
Made of such substance are they, that the world's black tide
Of vice and sin may o'er their heavenly beauty glide,
And leave no taint upon their soul's white purity,
That still remains unharmed, in blest security.
In haunts of vice for years they may assimilate
With types of men the lowest and most profligate;
But from their heart's dark night the viper's coils will be,
Or soon or late, unwound, leaving their beings free.

Negroes of San Domingo, say, how many years
Of fierce and stupid silence and of wretched fears

Continued ye in chains, before you courage found
To rise in might and tread your masters to the ground?
Thus, Rolla, is't to-day your sleeping thoughts awake,
And you from heavy chains your captive spirit shake.
Before your maddened eyes innumerable lights
Pass and repass again, in broken, endless flights.
The fragments of your life now crush into the ground;
Upon your broken flasks your bare feet deeply wound,
And in the last, long toast of your last orgy press
In your exhausted arms the ghost of nothingness.
Of nothingness! whose black, gigantic shadow grows,
Till o'er the radiant sun an inky pall it throws,
And all is darkest night—no light below, above.
Death! and thou hast not loved, and thou wilt never love!

As Rolla, pale and shiv'ring, closed the window, he
Broke from its slender stem a dahlia, carelessly.
"I love," the flower murmured, "and I sadly die.

Last night the zephyr kissed me with a long, sweet sigh;
But now, on summer nights his kiss will come in vain;
It cannot call me back to life and hope again.
No elements impure marred this our first caress;
He kissed my upturned face, as in my golden dress
I waited, hoping for some dear and tender token.
I bloomed to love. I die—my heart is broken."

"I love!" Those are the words that all great Nature cries,
That rings in songs of birds, that in the night-winds sighs,
And Mother Earth will sob it with her last low breath,
Ere in eternal night she sinks to endless death.
And you, ye morning stars, down shining from above,
Speaks not your quenchless light of love, of ceaseless love?
All motionless Jacques stood and gazed on Marie's face;
What was it lent her brow a new and wond'rous grace,
A beauty which had ne'er appealed to him before,
That made him thrill and shiver to his being's core?

Was not this poor, frail girl his sister, and this room
Was it not meant for both—to be their common tomb?
Did he not feel her suff'ring from his torture grim,
And bleeding from the deadly wound that would kill him?

"Yes, in you, slender creature, sweet," he said,
"Walks resignation with a weak and feeble tread.
Her suff'ring is my sister. Yes, that form should be
Extended on my tomb in marble effigy.
Wake not, fair child—to earth your waking hours belong,
But sleeping, God holds you within his keeping strong.
Yes, to your holy sleep I wish to bid good-by—
Your sleep, that I may love, and have not thought to buy;
Your sleep, that once again renews your childish bliss.
Upon your lashes dark, 'tis you that I would kiss.

"Is it an angel form, that like a perfumed air
Glides 'neath those filmy hangings, causing them to stir!

If it be true that when the dying swan doth glide
Down to his lonely death upon the glim'ring tide,
The inspiration for his wond'rous death-song springs
From the divine contour of real and living things;
If it be also true that here, upon the earth,
Unto deceit ofttimes true love itself gives birth,
And that the ardent lover sees his love arrayed
In radiant beauty he in his own heart hath made,
What need for me to seek elsewhere? For are not youth
And life in all their beauty here in very truth?
Love, thou may'st come! What matters, Marie, while you bloom,
And thy sad flow'r of life exhales its sweet perfume!"

With a deep sigh Marie awoke, and turned her eyes,
Blue as the azure depths of morning skies,
On Rolla's face. "I've had a strange, wild dream," she said;
"I thought that I was lying here, upon this bed;
I woke, and looked around; the room appeared to me
Like to some very old and spacious cemet'ry,
And half-decaying bones lay scattered everywhere;

And presently four men came, carrying a bier.
They paused, and set it down and kneeled to pray,
And then, surprised, I saw the cover fall away,
And in its inky depths your countenance appeared,
Pallid and cold in death, with streaks of blood besmeared!
And then it seemed as if you rose and came to me,
And took my hand in yours, and asked me wond'ringly,
'What do you in this place? Tell me, why come you here?
And would you take my place within that ghastly bier?
Tell me,' you urged again, 'why hither are you come?'
I turned and looked, and lo! I lay upon a tomb."

"And you dreamed thus?" Jacques said. "'Twas a strange dream indeed,
But it was true, my friend. To-morrow you'll not need
To be asleep to have that vision cross your sight,
For, Marie, do you know, I kill myself to-night!"

"What mean you, Jacques?" she cried, in terrified dismay.
"I mean," said he, "that I'm a ruined man to-day.

I came last night to say to you a long good-by!
I'm ruined! and all know, by my own hand I die."
"Alas!" she cried, "alas! and is there none to save?
None that will pluck you back from such untimely grave—
No mother, father, friend—no kinsman far or near,
Who'll stretch out helping hands, to whom your life is dear?
Tell me, ah, tell me, why this resolution dread?
Why kill yourself to-day?" appealingly she said.
Never had her fair face appeared so wond'rous fair,
Never had her large eyes shone with a light so rare.
Her sweet lips moved as if all anxiously they sought
To utter in Jacques' ear some tender, kindly thought.
At length she gently came and laid her cheek on his:
"A question I would ask," she murmured, "it is this:
I have no money; all the gold that I receive,
As soon as I reach home I to my mother give;
But I have my gold necklace—all I own on earth—
Would you that I sell it, and give to you its worth?"

Jacques smiled in answer, but no word spoke he,
And drank the contents of a vial hurriedly.
Then bending o'er the girl's fair form his livid face,
He softly pressed his lips upon the gold necklace.
When from her living breast she raised his drooping head,
Pallid, with staring eyes, Jacques Rolla fell back—dead.
His spirit forth had flown in that chaste, tender kiss,
But for a moment both had known love's holy bliss.

PORTIA

"What is chance?
It is the marble in the sculptor's hands
Receiving life, and Providence gives chance."
—*Schiller.*

I

As the dawn was beginning to lighten the east,
Count Onorio Luigi returned from the feast.
The Countess, fatigued with the joys of the ball,
Now leaned on his arm as they passed through the hall,
And silently, heedlessly brushed back her hair,
Which fell all disorderly, over a pair
Of beautiful eyes. To her chamber they passed,
And herself on the edge of the sofa she cast.
Already the cold chilling sough of December's
Rude blast was beginning to scatter the embers.
He approached not the fire, though it's radiance he caught,
But looked at his wife and remained wrapt in thought.

An uncertain and awful conviction now seemed
To float in his mind, just as if he had dreamed.

The Count was approaching old age, though his face
Showed less the reverses of time than the trace
Of the passions to which he had given the rein.
Of Florentine birth and when young he had been
What in Rome they describe as a sad libertine.
Debauchee through dulness, morose, saturnine,
At the usual time he had taken a wife,
And forgetful of nothing he'd learnt in his life,
As might be expected, was keen to detect
Every passing emotion, each look to suspect—
Why not be explicit?—was jealous forsooth.
The man who can love without doubting her truth
Is likest to him who, asleep without light,
But feels the fell blow which is hid from his sight.

In the Palace Luigi no caution was shown.
The Count would have killed e'en the King on his throne.
Whoe'er would have dared touch the hand of his wife
Would only have shown himself weary of life.
For no human power, after stopping to pray,
Could have made him a moment his vengeance delay.
He had bought Heav'n's indulgence, 'twas whispered around.
Who could, such a man, with impunity wound?

Surrounded with all the abundance of life,
Wedded at fifteen, rich, noble, his wife
From earliest childhood but one tie had known,
Though little of gratitude e'er had she shown.
How then could suspicion assail such a life?
What was she, if not the most trustworthy wife?
Luigi arising, and pacing the room,
Was slowly considering some thought in his gloom.
Then finally stopping and facing her, said,
" Portia, you're weary! I pray you to bed."
" Yes, I have danced much," she, blushing, replied.
" I'm worn out and weary—near fainting beside—"
" I know not," and gravely Onorio spoke,
" Who is this young man that wears the black cloak.
He has been noticed for two days in Rome.
Did he address you?" She answered, " Of whom
Are you speaking? I don't comprehend."
" Of him who at supper behind you remained
Standing to speak with you, as I suppose.
Have you been told his name?" " Nobody knows
Less of the young man than I. It is true."
" I thought him most likely," said Luigi, " and you?

But I wager at this time he faints not. Oh, no!
Jubilant, rather, and filled with a glow
Of rapture." She answered, "He's joyous no doubt.
But what is your purpose in speaking about
The man at this moment?" Onorio said,
"And pray what's your reason for turning your head,
And speaking no word? Is the subject so strange?
More than one evil speaker within easy range
Is doubtless this moment discussing the theme,
With a cynical smile and a guarded esteem.
There's naught so exciting or gay, on my soul,
As a black domino at a carnival ball."
"Friend," said the lady, "the sun soon will rise,
We should retire now." Onorio replies,
"I'm coming, and truly it's certain that one
Should take off his coat at the rise of the sun
If to sleep is your will, but rest you assured
That I am not sleepy and rest is abjured."
"Why leave me alone? I am grieved at your word,
Having done naught to displease you, my lord."
"Madame," said Luigi, and, stepping forth, caught her
Arm to his lips—like a cup of pure water
To the lips of the dying—implanting a kiss
With fervor, and then in intense agitation,
"Canst thou not comprehend, fairest Venetian,

The Florentine poison which works in the veins,
Devouring, insidious, till nothing remains?
One sinister word is sufficient to change
The joy in his heart, all his feelings estrange,
And blight in his bosom—as in a foul fen—
His trust in the honor of women and men—
The dreadful incurable taint in my blood,
Which, tending to madness, is scarcely withstood."
"What ill do you speak of?" fair Portia began.
"That ill," he replied, "when 'tis said of a man,
He's jealous. Yes, thus are the stricken ones named."
"O Mary of Heaven!" thus Portia exclaimed,
"Is it of me you are jealous, my Lord?"
"Jealous! Who says so? Not I, on my word.
Jealous? Why should I be? Come let this cease—
I am not jealous—so go sleep in peace."
Thus he withdrew, in a querulous mood,
And, leaning his arms on the balcony, stood—
The pale crescent moon at the coming of day,
Aloft in the heavens was fading away—
Watching his weary wife patiently weep,
While folding her arms on her bosom to sleep.

Night has a glamor of mystical powers,
And women therein, like the beautiful flowers,
Distil out a perfume of sweet influence,
When the zephyr of evening but touches the sense.

And so in the silence of earliest dawn,
Luigi—admiring her always, and drawn
To gaze on her beauty, her soft, tranquil eyes,
So pure and so pensive, as sleeping she lies,
Her fair drooping head and her posture so sweet,
Like a young faun reclining 'mid the tall wheat—
Felt thus, that to gaze on a woman asleep,
There liveth no soul who could willingly keep
His harshness, or hold his implacable air,
But will find in that vision his tenderest care,
And melt like the gold in the crucible's flame.
And what can he trust, if his eyes are to blame?
For if Nature's untrue, must he sever apart,
And guard his own eyes from the love of his heart?"

Standing alone in his ancestral hall,
Inclining his head 'neath the lamp on the wall,
The Tuscan imagined he heard the soft sound
Of a viol, and voices below, on the ground.
So, softly approaching the edge, he looked o'er,
And marked most distinctly two figures who bore
Guitars in their hands. The one quite unknown—
The other—assuredly, he was the one
Who wore the black mantle. Yes, him he would watch.
He scrutinized keenly the features of each.

He betrayed not a thought—though it must be
averred
He somewhat unconsciously felt for his sword,
As though to assure himself he could depend
That, having two rivals, he'd also a friend.
All was quite still, as with noiseless hand
He fastened the window and rapidly scanned
With an immobile countenance, that he might
find
Whether his wife in her slumber divined.
But she was motionless, and the new day
Made once more radiant her charm as she lay;
And the Florentine, with his orisons said,
Quietly undressing, betook him to bed—
Friend, in the world, if you ever have met
A native of Florence, and tried hard to get
A test of his temper, you're bound to declare
That hate in that country is not as 'tis here—
A fierce, threatening giant, with quick, angry
blow—
But a sleek, silent murderess, crouching below
In the ditches: espying her oncoming foe,
Decrepit and breathing out murderous lust,
And fearing a failure, she deals double thrust.

II

The church was deserted, the pale ghostly light
Cast its flickering gleam on the darkness of
night.

When the young stranger delayed at the door,
He did not remove the black mantle he wore,
To touch with his finger the water, although
He scarcely intended irreverence to show.
The organ was hushed, and silent the choir,
A few devotees were now kneeling in prayer,
The motionless lamps in the arches aloft
Seeming to sleep, and the foot's echoes soft
Repeated the sound like a whispering voice;
God's grand solitudes, subduing all noise.

Domes so mysterious, sacred solemnities,
Who can appear in you bearing his enmities?
What soul on seeing you e'er has remained
Doubtless and fearless? The stranger retained—
Regardless of sanctity—his attitude.
And, without bending his brow or knee, stood
Silently waiting. The hour slowly tolled,
A woman approaches him, trembling with cold—
The night was most chill—or it may have been years
That palsied her frame with the semblance of fears.
" Time flies," softly said he, " you hear the cock crow?
The streets seem deserted, the winds come and go.
Walk on, I will follow." The woman replied,
" Go as far as that wall, there's a door at the side,

And here is the key. She is waiting alone.
So hasten at once and make yourself known."
"Many thanks," said the stranger. He turned
and was gone.
She watched the door close, and seeming to falter,
"God help them" she said, as she walked to the
altar.

Now where, noble youth, art thou going so fast,
At this hour, when the shadows their long veils
have cast
Under the foot of the traveler? And why
Doth thy steed, fiery sparks from its hoof-beats
let fly?
With thy brow streaming wet and thy sword at
thy side,
Say, where art thou going? And what can be-
tide?
And why, as a fugitive, bend to thy horse?
The ground is yet gray, you may fall in your
course,
And thy faithful retainer, all breathless with
speed,
Sees thy colors from far, and scarce follows thy
lead.
God save thee, my friend, if it be love alone
Makes thee rush from the shadow and fly to the
dawn,
Love knows no restraint, and happy art thou
Who leave with thy mistress the sweat of thy
brow.

No fear in thy heart and no care for the danger,
Go forward to that which awaits thee, young stranger,
Be it handshake or sword at the turn of the gate,
What matters? Go forward, for God, He is great.

But nearer, the palace thy wondering eyes
They seek to distinguish and to recognize
This pavilion, with window wide open to-night.
Are thy wishes so high, and thy prudence so slight?
Young man, consider! This nook thou hast sought
Is kept more select to the eye than the thought
In the heart of its master, hidden and cold.
Yet under the trees at the foot of the old
Wall, like a hunter crouched low to the ground
Thou'rt waiting for something. Hush! whence comes that sound?
And what voice is that, so soft as to seem
'Tween the lattice above like a sweet feeble dream?
"Dalti, my treasure, my love, is it thou?"
"Portia, my heart! light of heaven! bend thy brow."

He's climbing and from the silk stair they employ,
A hand draws him in all a-tremble with joy.

Entwined in two burning arms, covered, and kissed,
The prey of the alcove, he's captured and blessed.

O ye decrepit ones, silvered with rime!
Chill hearts, whose emotions are shriveled by time
Bald centenarians, specters of fate!
Who pale in the sunlight, with faltering gait,
You are here called upon now to declare
You have not always been thus as you are,
And age has not always with giant hand brought
Your eyes to the ground, and your courage to naught.
You've had arms and loins, come tell us before
The hearse for your funeral stops at your door,
Tell us ye ancient ones, eager we list,
How the young heart of twenty leaps to a tryst.

"My love," said the child, when in rapture complete,
In sweet dishabille, she reclined at his feet,
"How blissful the silence, and almost it seems
As though we alone lived in this world of dreams."

Then she admires him, with fervent desires,
As always they do. For the woman admires
The man whom she loves, and the eyes she prefers
Are those that are e'en now reflected in hers,

And looking him over, she said, " Let me see
How fine thou hast made thyself. Was it for me?
Only for thee I have tried to be vain.
For whom these fine jewels? For whom this gold chain?
And this fair black plume, and all that I see?
Was it for me, love? Say, was it for me? "
Then she added, " My love I am trembling with fear
Lest anyone saw you when entering here."
But young Dalti answered not, veiling her charms
In the rays of the moon, as she lay in his arms,
Softly embracing his pale trembling one
As she lies with her fragrant head falling upon
His shoulder, and bending, he kisses her face,
At this moment encircled with beauty and grace.

" Sweet Portia," he murmured, " that mirror above
Is shining too fair in this somber alcove.
These flowers are too fresh, thine eyes are too bright;
Why wert thou not cruel, my Portia, to-night?
Perhaps with God's help then I weapons had found!
But now, when thy tears and thy kisses abound,
Say who can withhold me, or who bring a cure,
Too happy with love, thou wilt kill me for sure."

And as on the edge of the divan they lay,
She clung as the ivy unto the oak-tree.
As he spoke he had trembled—she felt his heart beat,
She saw him turn pale as he said, " O my sweet,
In all things you know there's a barrier black,
When no matter how great, one is forced to look back,
With whatever vain love the heart may be filled,
The desire is at times far less great than the yield.
And heaven, resembling the soul, which is deathless,
Has a sphere e'en where the eagle is breathless,
Where delirium holds and the air becomes fire,
Where the god-life begins then the man must expire."

The moonlight was veiled and the night was profound,
And no star of Heav'n went its sentinel round.
The lamp-light first flickered, then suddenly died.
" Stir not, I shall light it," fair Portia cried.
Stooping, she crept to the hearth in the dark,
The half-dying embers scarce covered a spark,
So that a kindling was hard to be found.
When light at last routed the darkness around,
" O Dalti! O God!" she exclaimed, " we are three!"

"Yes, we are three!" And the voice seemed to be
Answered by echoes far down in the rock.
And motionless, hid in the folds of his cloak,
Like a statue that stands on the threshold of night,
Onorio's form stood revealed to their sight.

How came he here? Had he watched them a space
In silence and witnessed their ardent embrace?
Of whom had he learnt the hour and the date?
What patience had made him his vengeance await
Through the night? Yet his face was most calm and serene,
His vigilant sword in his hand was not seen.
His face neither hatred nor anger did show,
But his hair at that moment was whiter than snow,
Which before was as dark as the raven's black wing.
Under the light of the lamp's feeble rays,
Now dimmed by the dawn, the two lovers' gaze
Fell on Luigi, white-haired in a night,
Nor knew were his locks or his face the more white.
"Portia," said he in a voice saturnine,
"Thy father when dying laid thy hands in mine,

Mine open remained. To have drawn thine
away
Would then have been easy. Why didst thou
delay?"

But young Dalti had risen. He came to the
front.
"There's no time to be lost. If this woman you
want,
En garde! Let the one give her up with his
soul."
"E'en so let it be," said the Count, and the whole
Place rang with the clash of the sword upon
sword.
She knelt at their feet and in vain she implored,
Disheveled and trembling, she feared when too
late.
Who under the sun can escape from his fate?
When of the days and nights granted below
The measure is full then away we must go.
Why struggle? the graveyard is yawning for all,
Into which one must assuredly fall.

The Count heaved one sigh as he fell to the
ground.
"Come away," said the youth to the girl: she had
swooned.
"No time's to be lost," so he takes to his horse,
He mounts with his mistress, abandons the
corse,

And riding away in the gloom of the night,
Not knowing the road to the left or the right.

III

There's one hour in Venice, of soft serenades,
When veiling St. Mark's and her somber arcades,
The night of the spring with the morning plays,
Its mask in its hand and its feet in the haze.
From the palaces crumbling no reveling flows
Disturbing the saints in their old porticoes.
The city's asleep, and the calm water shares
Its sleep at the foot of the old marble stairs.
Then it is that afar from the side of a quay
In silence, a boat is despatched on her way.
One boatman propelling, she moves without sail,
With the flag floating over the light on the rail.
By the breeze softly balanced the boat glides
along
In the midst of the night. With the young
Dalti's strong
Arms keeping time in a rhythmical sweep,
As he pulls from the shore and into the deep.
But when the city, which seeming to lower
And far in the distance to merge in the shore,
Had quite disappeared from the ambient space,
Like Halcyon suddenly stopped in the race,
The boat spread her oars on the blue sea at peace.
" My Portia," said he, " the wind seems to cease.
Sing me thy ballade."

Perhaps in the room where Luigi was slain
Still there remaineth the dark crimson stain.
Perchance all the servants now over his bier
Have not ceased their praying, or dropt the last tear.
Perhaps now amidst all their sad preparations
The monks have not finished their parting oblations,
And like the black cypress-trees, moving their heads
Are mingling their sighs with the hymns of the maids,
Nor yet at the tomb have extinguished the light.
Perhaps on this very eve, hidden from sight,
The pale, bloody corpse of the Count has been found,
His favorite dog lying crouched on the ground.
But when Dalti urged her she strove to begin,
Accompanying herself with the sweet mandolin,
Mingling her voice with the sea breezes flying,
The murmuring waves and the echoes replying.

What man believes himself so to excel,
That his friends in their mem'ries will cherish him well?
Nay, even although in his youth he's braved death
His memory will vanish as soon as his breath.
The tears of this life may be likened to dew
Whose gems in the morning the grasses bestrew,

But the breeze soon will scatter, the sun's light
soon dries,
Then oblivion cometh as sleep to the eyes.

Dalti leaned on his hand, and he rested his eyes
For a time on his sweetheart, and then on the
skies.
Thus silent, and seeming himself to control,
He looked for a time as though wavering in soul.
" Portia," said he as he wakes from his spell,
" What you could do you have done. It is well.
But—speak without mystery—do you regret? "
" What should I regret? That we ever have
met? "
" Of having," said Dalti, " abandoned for me
Your wealth and your home, your good name—
and he,"
And, fixing two piercing dark eyes on her face,
He added, " Your husband, and courted dis-
grace."
She answered him simply, " I've done that for
you.
I do not repent of it, neither do you."

" Mysterious Nature," he murmuring said,
" Behold this fair creature so tenderly made,
Nurtured in luxury, under a sky
The mildest on earth, and where no tempests fly.
This flower that has only just bloomed to the
day,
How has it fallen and withered away?

Has the touch of this cursèd, vile hand laid it low?
It is well," he continued, " 'tis well, even so.
She is mine. Come, arouse thyself. Hast thou ere thought
Who I am? What I am? Carest thou aught?"
" Who can you be, my friend, but a rich lord!
No one you speak to but honors your word."

" Have you not noticed in some promenades,
In the quiet evening, beneath the arcades,
Women of pleasure, a carnival brood,
Dragging their gala costumes in the mud?
Often they have at the end of the day
Not even bread for their supper, and they,
Miserable specters, such is their fate,
Consuming with famine, do not hesitate
To lavish on travelers their hungry embrace,
These creatures of destiny, born to disgrace.
It's a miserable fate. Mine, alas, is the same."
" Such as that," said the girl, with an accent of blame,
" Now I know you are jesting, it cannot be so."
" Be still," answered Dalti, " the truth you must know
At once, in this place, and let come whate'er may,
I'm the son of a fisherman!"
" Mary! I pray
Have pity," said Portia, " if it should be true."
" It is true," said the stranger, " now listen and you

Will believe that my father a fisherman was.
I do not remember the day or the cause
Which called him to go, and left me alone.
The fortune he left was this boat which I own.
I was only fifteen and my father I loved,
But my coming too much for my mother had proved.
My real name is Daniel Zoppieri.
The work of my hands for the time seemed to be
Enough for my needs. I followed his trade.
The mysterious stars shining over my head,
Alone were the eyes that beaming on me
Beheld my salt tears falling into the sea.
So the years they passed on and I managed to live
A life uneventful and quiet. But give
My father his due, who though humble was proud,
He had given me all the tuition he could,
So that I knew Tuscan and oft went to prayer,
And even at that time I knew Venice—where

One night a great lord, Gianetto by name,
Hired my boat for a concert, and with him came
His mistress, a beauty, a fair Muranese—
They were alone, all was dark, and the seas
Were at strife. And scarcely had half an hour passed
When the storm increased. She was frightened and cast

Herself on my bosom, afraid of a wreck,
And folded me close with her arms round my neck.
You know what her life was, how splendid her grace.
Till then, I had never dreamed aught like her face.
All through the darkness I trembled and tossed,
In that crisis more than my slumber was lost."

At these words the stranger e'en paused to take breath,
And Portia was listening, stiller than death.
He continued:
"O Venice, perfidious place,
To whom heaven has granted the banefulest grace!
I lived in that air, which enervates the soul—
And whose impure breath, has infected the whole
Of Italy—and as I wandered around
Thy palaces, seeing a nation of slaves
Who bend to the grandees like sycophant knaves,
Paralyzing their energies—these haughty great,
Whose shadows are bowed to, and who sleep in state
Only 'neath marble and on floors of gold.
But I, who was only a fisherman, lolled
At theatres, churches—tired of my fate,
Returning each night with a heart desolate.
I read and reflected. Thus it was by degrees,
Portia, I changed all my love of the seas—

That love of the ocean that gave me my health.
Like a shadow I chased away my only wealth.
I saw you—I then sold my nets and my boat.
I had no clear reason, nor knew what I sought.
However, I sold them, my sole earthly treasures—
My wealth, or my sorrow, for thus a man measures—
All my riches I held in the palm of one hand,
And, roaming, I wandered about in the land.
Soon tired out with walking, I sat sad and lone
At a silent crossroad, on a boulder of stone.
I had noticed by chance, in a dubious maze,
Near the square of St. Mark, a large gambling-place.
I entered and emptied my hand on the board.
Then, silent, awaited the absolute word.
I remained alone, standing. I won at the first
And resolved to play on, daring fate to its worst.
But why tell you all of that terrible night!
The whole of the time an invincible sprite
Kept me nailed to the place, and into my hands
Fell, moment by moment, bright gold like the sands.
Thus I remained, and deep in my soul
Each time the infamous wheel in its roll
Revolved with a screech I thought that the sea,
With its deep dark bed, would be ready for me.
But no! At the last the banker declared
The bank was now broken, and every eye stared

As they saw me depart. As I ope'd my valise
I found that therein was the wealth of Borghese
And the infamous love of a courtesan throng.
I left, and for three days I hovered among
The trees where I'd seen you, and cherished the hope
That some day you'd pass again there on the slope
Of the grass, and perchance I might make you a sign.
All is now known to you."
"Goodness divine!"
Said the girl, "Is that why you grieve? On my word!
Do you think I could love you more if a lord?"
"Be silent," said Dalti, "you're only the wife
Of the fisher Zoppieri! No, no, on my life,
Nothing more!" "And why, if you please, nothing more?"
"Nothing more, I declare, for that wealth which I bore
Back to the tables is gone as it came;
Yesterday's play was the end of the game.
When I—'twas for you—again tempted fate,
I lost. You may save yourself ere it's too late."
"You've everything lost?" "On three throws of the dice
My money, my palace, all went in a trice.
All, saving this boat, which I purchased again.
Portia, on my soul! I'll not seek to detain.

Why I've remorselessly, eagerly brought
You up to this point of sharing my lot,
Ask me not. I have done it, to argue's no use.
You may leave me and go. It's your right,
therefore choose."

Portia from childhood surrounded by love,
Had lived as a countess, in affluence throve,
Spending her young days in pleasure's domain,
Life seemed to be perfect and naught to attain,
Ignoring all want, and seeing no grief
Or suffering, except when she carried relief.
Her father, a rich and ennobled old lord,
Although avaricious, his daughter adored,
His happiness always to see her admired,
To hear her called beautiful, all he desired.
For all smiled upon her. Onorio, he
Before God and her only bended the knee.
When Dalti was speaking she sat without motion,
Her eyes alone wandering over the ocean.
The horizon was clear, and the transparent lave
Of the water reflected the moon in its wave.
A whispering wind through the darkness was heard,
And Dalti looked at her, but said not a word.

She wavered? I know not—but soon she inclined
As bends tender flower in breath of the wind,

Slowly and frail on its stalk leaning over,
She turned her face dumbly—in tears—to her lover.
" Remember, Countess," said the youth, " that I now
Am only a fisherman, always, and thou,
Only a fisherman's love, and we two
Soon will grow old, I may die before you."
" But God reunites all the lovers," she said.
"And we can both travel together when dead.
The angel who takes thee, will me sure receive."
But the fisher was silent, he did not believe.

LUCIE: AN ELEGY

Friends belovèd, when I die,
Plant a willow over me,
Through its leaves the night will sigh,—
Kindly will its shadow be,
And its drooping boughs shall weep,
O'er the earth wherein I sleep.

And sleeping there, this memory will I hoard:
One evening when we were alone,—we two,
Her white hand wakened from the harpsichord
A music faint as wings of zephyrs through
The rushes passing, with a tempered flight,
As though they feared to wake the drowsy night.
What melancholy pleasures of the dark
Came toward us from the chalices of flowers,
The ancient oaks and chestnuts in the park
Swayed slowly as they marked the amorous hours.
We listened to their music, for we flung
The casement open to the perfumed night.
We were alone—pensive—and ah, so young.
I looked at Lucie—she was fair and slight,
And from her eyes—deep, limpid as the dew,
I saw reflected heaven's unclouded blue.

Her beauty won me. Ah! I loved but her,
And thought I loved her with a brother's love.
She was so modest—Love's interpreter
She seemed, my Lucie, from the realms above.
I sat there silent, with her hand in mine,
And read upon her sad and charming brow,
Sweet reveries and hints of things divine,
And peace unbroken—they have vanished now!
But as I watched her there, I could but guess
That wrinkled sorrow must, in truth, depart
From those twin stars of peace and happiness,
Her youthful features and her youthful heart.
Even as I mused, the moon from clouds now broke,
And meshed her in a thousand silver beams.
She bent above her harpsichord and woke
A low sweet song, inspired by our dreams.

Daughter of sorrow! Harmony!
Lovers speak their thought in thee.
Out of heaven you came to earth,
Chose Italia for your birth,
And tarrying here, you now impart
The hidden secrets of the heart.
Thought, that timid virgin, who
Fears a shadow, fears not you.
Nay, you throw a gossamer veil
O'er her face, so wan and pale,

And she passes, calm and wise,
Fearless now of prying eyes,
Where your lyric spirit broods
In waves, in night, in haunted woods.

Her song was ended now. We were alone.
Pensive I gazed on her. Her color fled
And with a sigh, sweet as the music's tone,
Upon my breast she leaned her drooping head.
Even so Brabantio's daughter sighed of old
Upon Othello's bosom. Ah! Poor child!
You wept and on your lips so white and cold
You took my kisses—would that you had smiled!
For then I knew, gazing on your white face,
It was your grief that welcomed my embrace.
As I embraced you then, so cold and white,
So Death embraced you ere two months had fled.
So did you fade, chaste flower of my delight—
Your petals scattered and your perfume fled.
God took you when you were so young, so sweet,
Your swaddling clothes became your winding-sheet.

Now thou art gone, how often I recall
Thy happy smile, thy music and thy glee,
Thy dreams of love, thy childlike speech and all
That unknown charm that drew all hearts to thee!

Ah! Innocence! I understand thy power
To make Faust pause at Marguerita's bower.
Love of my early days, where hast thou gone?
  Peace to thy soul, peace to thy memory!
Adieu! No more we two shall wander on
  Through the still twilight, past the trysting-tree.
Thy white hands touch the ivory keys no more.
Thy voice is stilled—adieu, forevermore!

Friends belovèd, when I die,
  Plant a willow over me,
Through its leaves the night will sigh—
  Kindly will its shadow be,
And its drooping boughs shall weep,
O'er the earth wherein I sleep.

May, 1835.

A STROKE OF FORTUNE

I

Feats of fortune are admittedly
The proper matter for octavo books.
So then I'll tell you one that has the looks
Of fashion's scandal; bound in calf to be.
The taste is natural, mounteth to the moon,
Endymion's story once, we'll know this soon.

II

All we do now, we tell. The cause of this
Is quite excusable; we do not much.
However little 'tis, desire is such
The record of our feats we must not miss.
Each one knows now, while making lively prose,
The age—a mandarin who letters knows.

III

All must avow that antique modesty
Makes people yawn and lose their interest:
Gone now it is—and of New York in quest;
An ancient branch it was of this life's tree,
On which so many luckless ones were packed.
We're not amazed to see its arms are cracked.

IV

Scandal, indeed, we must and do admire.
As old as Herod, with a lasting youth,
Five thousand years adorable in truth,
Fresh ever, ever gay, Tithonus' sire,
Aurora makes him younger and more fair.
At night he cradled sleeps, in Venus' care.

V

Learn, reader, that I come from Germany.
You know in summer how things bore us here;
And I, myself, impelled by anxious fear,
To Baden and the pleasant country flee.
An English park is Baden on a hill,
With Montmorency has some likeness still.

VI

July the month, and he who knows the ways,
And feels respect for Boulevard de Gand,
Knows too that fashion's absolute command.
Each creature that a turn-out richly sways,
Will rush into that town precipitate,
And jostle friends from morn till very late.

VII

Baden is noble and is wholesome too.
Parisian ladies learn by the gazettes,
And as they go to Herbault for toilettes,
They also go for health, a bargain new;

New roses in the cheek, a breast of snow.
Forbidden never, doctors ne'er say no.

VIII

To take the waters: that's a settled score,
All understand, of course, the journey's aim.
What waters? None I saw the time I came.
That some there be, I wager less nor more,
And, frankly, I believe the neighborhood
Has water somewhat salt and pretty good.

IX

All flock to Baden with a clear intent,
For having waltzed all winter, we are thin.
Each one as 'twere the ghost of violin.
But when night falls, what can a man invent?
No one at Vieux Château; at Terrace none;
We enter the Casino all alone.

X

Fossil and big and built of roughest stone,
Maison de Conversation is a block,
A Grecian temple, tiles that cover rock,
Around this barn a peristyle is thrown;
A shapeless whatnot, wanting even name,
A bogus Parthenon, a hayloft frame.

XI

Perhaps this mammoth of the mineral age
Beelzebub has built, we know not when;
An aerolite perhaps come down to men

In week of carnival when rainstorms rage.
Howe'er this all may be, the beast has sides
Constructed nicely, for a soul resides

XII

Within the soul of gambling. Now, hats hence,
And you enter here and lay aside your hope.
The cloth of green is spread, and, from the cope,
Behind those pillars in the hall immense,
There swings a chandelier, a gilded thing,
Upon the night a yellow patch to fling.

XIII

From eve to morn there rolls the grand *perhaps,*
Old hazard, torchlight dim, in our ennui,
The only torch above, we flickering see.
Two steps away a dance, that window raps,
Then bounds and disappears from view,
As flees a kid when stinging bees pursue.

XIV

To sounds of instruments, mysterious words;
In nasal cadence, croupiers singing hum,
Joy rules and song, the roulette now has come.
They set it whirling, dancing round like birds,
And gaily raking in the sparkling coin,
The raking and the rhythmic voices join.

XV

It is a public trough, who wills may drink.
I saw a peasant, a Black Forest child,

His staff in hand, come wandering from the wild.
Into this den, and o'er the ivory blink.
Cross lots all night he ran with stooping head,
A desperate fugitive from honest bed.

XVI

He and his mates I've seen, 'neath smoking lamp,
Red jackets, and their shoes with muddy stains,
Put on the rake a whole year's sweaty gains.
Turning big hats with callous thumbs and damp,
And there, with horror dumb to gaze on Fate,
Till bread had vanished they would ever wait.

XVII

And shall I say they lost? 'Twas hardly there.
It took not long to empty their coarse hands.
They gazed, they stared at all the stranger bands,
At gold, at sensual joys, at bathers fair,
The enchanted world, in season of the baths,
Which comes and goes yet follows no set paths.

XVIII

They ran about, departed, drunk with light,
And night upon their eyes its bandage laid.
Those empty hands, that earth had fertile made,
They stretched them out when coming home by night,
Groping to feel along the cottage wall,
Grandmother by the hearth and children all!

XIX

Immortal Father, and thy Son made man,
Thy kingdom cometh, the just God art thou . . .
All roads lead to mighty Rome e'en now.
A gentleman, I oft forget my plan,
That peasant folk, dear reader, pray forgive,
I have them on my heart where'er I live.

XX

At Baden, then, and you will think doubtless,
Since I set out to talk so much of play,
That I took care to fling a bit away.
You're in the right, and I the truth confess.
Just as to put an army to the rout,
One coward's 'nough to show the way about.

XXI

So with my purse. It needeth but one crown
To start the rout. The rest is quickly lost.
All I possess, it seems, resembleth most
Panurge's sheep; when only one is down,
Panurge is drained dry, his flock is shorn.
We take the earliest step and late we mourn.

XXII

My pocket is an island without strand;
One can't get back if one has left the ground.
One thread once broken and the skein's unwound;
Deadly allurement, treacherous as the sand,

Since always I feel horror at a void,
And after dream of friends to death decoyed.

XXIII

One evening, after a determined fight,
With nothing left except a big headache,
I scanned the skies and hoped some rest to take,
And Ossian's heroes swam into my sight.
I swiftly thought a conquest next to make,
Romantic phrases flit my soul within.

XXIV

I only need, said I unto my soul,
Permission granted by the Lord above,
That some fine woman walk about this grove;
The thickets are unguarded; hot waves roll;
Winds waft toward love, the horizon ablaze,
And any woman now might seek love's gaze.

XXV

If there should pass beneath these chestnut trees,
Some noble beauty of the Flemish school,
A damsel plump, escaped from Teniers' rule,
Some German angel dreaming in the breeze,
Some find gold maiden of the legend sweet,
With floods of velvet trailing round her feet.

XXVI

Along that somber alley she would walk,
With fawn-like step and pouting, sulky air;

Hearing the wind and leaf all murmuring there,
In love with indolence and languid talk,
Her restless fingers torturing a flower,
Spring on her cheek, her heart in heavenly power.

XXVII

She would delay down there beneath the bower,
And I would say no word, but madly go,
And, bending down to earth, kneel meek and low,
Look at her azure eyes, the firmaments' power,
And ask one favor that she would not spurn,
For burning love a kindly love return.

XXVIII

When I had gone so far in argument,
Up to my neck in reverie profound,
A nurse and child I saw, that passed my ground.
I thought I saw that this poor innocent
Had sorrow masked and traced in his big eyes.
No love in me like love of children lies.

XXIX

I could not see the youngster treated ill,
I rushed to stop them, bade the girl to tell
What anger, what severities dispel
The cherub's mirth, great eyes with sadness fill.
" No matter what he does, your pardon give,
And all he wishes, grant him, as you live."

XXX

It is my sentiment to spoil a child.
The little chap bestowed a welcome smile;
And found no word to answer for the while.
Then, raised one hand and spoke with accent mild:
"For beggar man no money, not a mite."
The tone he lisped in I'll not try to write.

XXXI

Reader, you know I was a ruined thing,
I had, I think, two crowns left in my purse.
And these my sole resource, or worse,
The only drop of water in the spring,
The only glass of wine to cheer my meal—
I pulled them out and gave with hasty zeal.

XXXII

The coin he took and straightway off he went.
Some days from that when lying in my bed,
Rapped on my door Dame Fortune whom I dread:
She brought a good round sum from Paris sent;
And then a happy thought beguiled my brain,
"I'll pay landlord, nor credit ask again."

XXXIII

I learned it was a girl, my little chap,
English by birth, the family very good.

The day of my departing ready stood,
I met the mother by some curious hap;
And at the ball, where chatterers are arrayed,
I wrought full well at chatterbox's trade.

XXXIV

A drop of milk upon the ethereal plain
Of old came falling from the firmament,
And night caressing, o'er her chariot bent
And saw make furrows on the azure main.
She shook her folded raiment's pearly gleam,
And made a diamond bed of that clear stream.

XXXV

Spoiled child of Memory's daughters, Greek of old,
This honeyed tale, ambrosial, gilded has;
One point I find that quite neglected was:
When Juno saw her ivory bosom cold
So change to milky rivers all the sky,
She trembled then at sovereign spouse on high.

XXXVI

Feeling the trickling of the streamlet dear,
She dared to lay her hand upon her breast,
To spare Olympus turnèd to her rest;
The sun was far, the earth so very near,
Upon our clay a drop fell from above,
Whence floweth all that we on earth can love.

XXXVII

That youthful mother was a beauteous girl,
A downright child, of England opulent.
Before they such another pearl present
Her net will often in the waters whirl.
Her portrait, reader, I would rightly sketch
And nothing better than the milk-drop fetch.

XXXVIII

Ne'er more transparent o'er rosy blood
Was cast white veil of melancholy.
I sat beside her and I spoke of Italy.
She knew that land, its every flower or bud.
She was returning to a colder mart,
And bringing rays of sunshine in her heart.

XXXIX

We chatted long, and she was natural, kind.
She knew no ill, and good alone she wrought.
Of heart's own wealth she gave the alms I sought,
Seeing how hearts can one another find,
Not bold enough to plot, I gave my heart;
She knew not, yet she was my counterpart.

XL

That evening when returning from the dance,
I gave my arm, we trod the gambling hall—
No other way leads homeward from the ball.
"You are," said she, "departing soon for
France.

Between this place and home there's some expense,
Against it, lucky play may prove defense."

XLI

Smiling, she gently made me take my place,
I know not what caprice bestowed advice.
With hand outstretched, " Play there," she said, " it's nice."
My blue-eyed angel pushed me on apace.
My friend, I only need to say, anon
That my few louis on that number won.

XLII

And in this way for one whole hour we played,
Beholding treasures round me swiftly fall.
'Twas red or black, I cannot now recall;
'Twas ten or twenty, reckoning never made,
I was to start for France, she, England cold,
And there I was with hands all filled with gold.

XLIII

When I reached home and gazed at all my wealth,
And then remembered fortune's cruel frowns;
The day I gave the youngster those two crowns,
I thought them lost, but charity is wealth.
I saw the wisdom of th' All-seeing one:
The mother has due restoration done.

XLIV

Reader, unless my memory's gone astray,
I promised, I believe, when I began,
A stroke of fortune, and this is the way
My luck, you see, throughout one evening ran.
Others I know with luck longer abode;
But better still, this one night's pleasant load.

DECEMBER, 1834.

HOPE IN GOD

Now, ere this feeble heart beneath youth's spell,
To its illusions bids a last farewell,
I fain would keep the old philosophy
Which makes Epicurus divinity.
I fain would live and love, and learn mankind,
In quest of joy, small profit hope to find,
And do what men can do, be what they are,
Gaze upward to the sky nor feel one care.

I cannot; me the infinite torments,
Fearless to dwell thereon hope consents;
Heedless of men's words, reason is dismayed
To comprehend it not, though clear displayed.
What is the world, what are we doing here,
If we, in peace, must veil the skies in fear,
To move like sheep, eyes fixed upon the ground,
Deny the rest, can that be pleasure found?
It is no man to be, degrade the soul.
Chance made no part in the created whole;
Or happy, or unhappy, woman born,
I cannot flee away from men in scorn.
What shall we do? Seek joy, command the wise,
Rejoice and die; the gods to sleep advise.

Hope only, answers our firm Christian faith,
Heaven watches thee. Thou canst not die, it saith.
Between two roads I, wavering, stop and stay,
Aloof, would follow easier, gentler way.
Not one exists, so speaks a secret voice,
Believe, deny, there is the heaven-given choice.
And such my thought; for souls with torture burn;
Make mere excuses, this, or that, in turn.
But the indifferents are an atheist's rout.
They could not sleep had they one day of doubt.

I yield me then and since the thought has bred,
Deep in my heart desire and anxious dread,
My knees shall bend, with hope I will believe.
What fate is mine, what would high heaven receive?
Held in the hand of God, more dread, I go,
Than all the ills combined here below.
Alone, a wanderer, frail, wretched man,
My deeds that witness eye must ever scan.
He watches, follows. Let heart beat too high
It might His great divinity defy.
A gulf is 'neath my feet. If I fall in,
Eternity will expiate my sin.
My hangman, judge, with victim plays his game,
For me is all a snare, all changing name;
Love is a sin, and happiness a crime,
Temptation all that work of seven days' time.

Of human nature naught can I retain,
Virtue for me is dead, remorse they feign.
The recompense I wait, the pain I shun,
My guide is fear, toward death, my mask, I run.

And still, they tell me, waits unbounded joy
The elect. And when those blest without alloy,
If you deceive me, will you life deny?
If you speak to me, so can you ope the sky?
That land of beauty of the prophet's cry,
If it exists above, must be a desert dry.
The blest you make you wish them all too pure,
Though joy may come, the suffering more sure.
I am a man no more, would not be less,
Nor try for more. What shall I then confess?
Since I believe no promises of priest,
Shall I then go consult the indifferent beast?

And if by haunting visions thus bent,
My heart the real seeks some joy to get,
With each vain pleasure summoned to my aid,
Disgust and gloomy death my sense invade.
The very days when impious is my thought,
When ending doubt denial full has brought,
Should I attain whatever in this life
Each man can seek with vast desire and strife,
Both power, and health and riches freely give,
And love itself, the good for which we live,
Let fair Astarte, idol of ancient Greece,
Outspread her arms from azure lands of peace.

Could I explore the bosom of the earth,
To win the secret elemental birth,
Transform enlivening matter to my will,
Make matchless beauty my desire to still;
Should Horace, Epicurus old,
Me at their side a happy mortal hold,
Should they, in love with nature's ancient code,
Loud sing of joy and contempt of God,
My words would come "Whatever we may be done,
I suffer on, the world is older grown.
Hope fills the earth with infinite surmise,
In our despite toward heaven we lift our eyes!"

What then remains? Reason revolts, breaks out,
Tries to believe, in vain, the heart to doubt.
The Christian frightens, but the atheist creed
Despite the senses, shall not hear nor heed.
To truly pious men impious seem,
Me, the indifferent, merely crazy deem.
To whom shall I resort, what voice's sound
Shall soothe this heart when doubt inflicts its wound?
There is, they say, one philosophic creed
Which can without a revelation read,
Can guide us safely through our existence,
Betwixt religion and indifference.
I acquiesce. But where are they who frame
Systems of truth nor wish the faith to name,

Sophistic impotents, believing but themselves,
What are the arguments, their reason delves?
One shows me here two principles at war,
Which, both defeated, both immortal are;
Another finds far off within some heaven lone,
A useless god who asks no altar stone.
I see the dreams of Plato, Aristotle see;
I listen, praise and walk my pathway free.
Under the monarch find a despot God.
To-day he gives a democratic nod.
Pythagoras, Leibnitz both me transform.
Descartes abandons me in vortex storm.
Montaigne, self-student, nothing learns and sees.
Pascal, a-tremble, his own vision flees.
Pyrrho my sight, and Zeno senses, takes,
Whatever stands, Voltaire casts down and breaks.
Trying th' impossible with wearied air,
Spinosa finds his God is everywhere.
The English sophist cries, Man's a machine,
And in the fog a German rhetor's seen,
Who of philosophism, ruin wrought,
Declares our heaven void, concludes with naught.

So human science then becomes a wreck!
Five thousand years of doubt are at our beck,
Five thousand years of persevering fag
With doubt, as final word, perplexed we lag.
Ah! poor distracted, paltry human brains,
How intricate your key that all explains;

To mount above, no wings upon your back,
Desire you have, but faith alone you lack.
I pity pride, that racks your wounded soul.
You feel the torments round my heart that roll.
You understand it, all that bitter sight
Which makes man shudder at the Infinite.
Pray we! Forswear the miserable toil
Of childish reckonings, petty futile moil.
Now that your bodies have returned to dust,
Fall on my knees beside your tombs, I must.
Ye pagan rhetors, first in knowledge, come,
Departed Christians, dreamers here at home:
Believe me, prayer is hope's expectant voice!
That God, man answer; speak to Him, rejoice,
For God is just and good to pardon send.
Your sufferings great, the rest to Him commend.
If bare is heaven, to none offense we make;
One, if he hears, shall on us pity take.

Oh! Thou whom none has ever known,
Nor being false, can e'er deny
Who gave me life, 'twas Thou alone,
And who, to-morrow makes me die!

By faith alone, art understood.
If faith be ours, why doubts of Thee?
Why give not faith in measure good,
That none may say Thou canst not be?

As soon as man lifts up his head,
To that great temple in the skies,
He sees a vast creation spread,
A glorious temple in his eyes.

When now descends into his heart,
He finds Thee there; thou livest in him.
He can not weep or love apart,
'Tis God alone, wills every whim.

The highest aim of human thought,
The grandest rôle as played by man,
To prove Thou dost exist, be taught
Thy name, O everlasting One.

Whatever name Thou mayest be called,
Jesus, or Jupiter, Brahma,
Or Truth Eternal, thus extolled,
Toward Thee all arms are stretched, Allah!

The latest of the sons of earth
Will give thee thanks, from grateful heart,
When misery is turned to mirth,
And happiness appears in part.

The whole world gives Thee glory, praise.
The bird sings sweetly on its nest;
To Thee, for rain of rainy days,
A thousand anthems are addressed.

Thy every act astounds our gaze,
Nor ray of love divine is lost,
No soul so vile, Thou canst not raise,
For this we kneel upon the dust.

Why, then, O Master, so supreme,
Hast Thou created evil great?
That reason, virtue, in its gleam,
On seeing it, affrighted wait!

When all the splendid things of earth
Proclaim Thy attributes divine,
Bear witness to a father's worth,
Love, strength and goodness will combine.

Then how in view of heaven's sight,
Are acts so full of hideous hate,
That prayer will die, unhappy plight!
On lips of the unfortunate?

Why, in Thy heavenly work of love,
Should discord draw unhappy breath?
What is it crime and pest may prove?
Just God! Why should we suffer death?

Thy pity must have been profound
When, with its blessings and its ills,
This world with love and horror crowned,
Came forth from chaos! Sadness fills

My heart, to think Thou didst submit
  Thy sons to torture! Can Thy sight
Find pleasure in the burning pit?
  Thy power for good is infinite.

Why shall the misery of earth
  Conceive of, and divine, a God?
Doubt has despoiled our heavenly birth.
  In place of Thee, we feel the rod.

If these, Thy creatures, are so base,
  Unworthy of approaching Thee,
In nature Thou shouldst leave no trace
  By which Thou might discovered be.

Thy power would remain no less,
  And we still feel its heavy blow;
But rest and ignorance, we confess,
  Would make our ills more mild, we know.

If suffering, and prayer, and praise,
  Move not thy glorious majesty,
Preserve Thy grandeur from our gaze
  In Space's dread immensity.

But if our mortal anguish touch
  Thy heart with pity, if Thine ear
Amid the heavenly songs, be such
  As can our direst moaning hear,

Shatter that canopy of space
That hides our eager quest of Thee.
Tear down the veil that mars thy grace,
And show thyself, most amiably.

Then wilt Thou see on earth a flame
Of firmest faith and burning love.
All earth will then adore Thy name,
As do the heavenly hosts above.

The years which have exhausted it,
The burning tears that dimmed its eyes,
Like dew beneath the sun shall flit,
And earth will be one paradise.

Then Thou will hear hosannas sung
In concerts of celestial joy,
Like heavenly music heard among
The courts of heaven, which saints enjoy.

Our chants would sound o'er land and sea,
And Pain and Hate would howling fly,
And Doubt and Blasphemy would flee,
And Death itself, at last, would die.

February, 1838.

A WASTED EVENING

I was alone at *Théâtre Français,*
The other night. The author had but poor
Success; 'twas Molière, and now we know
That this grand blunderer, who made *Alceste,*
Knew naught of art of tickling intellect,
And serving to a turn, fine *dénoûment.*
Thanks be to God, our authors have changed modes,
And now we love a drama cut in style,
Where base intrigue and fine philosophy
Are interwoven, as a long festoon
Unrolls as rebus round a penny toy.

To this plain harmony, however, I gave ear,
Marking how common sense makes genius speak.
I marvelled what a love for goading truth
This man possessed, with proud simplicity;
What manful gaiety, and so profound
That, when we've laughed at it, we should have wept.
And of myself I asked, "Is marveling enough?
Is it enough to come, as though by chance,
To hear a cry of nature from the soul,
To wipe away a tear, so go our way,

Active elsewhere, I give it ne'er a thought?"
Enveloped as I was with reverie,
I did not fail to scan the balcony;
I saw not far off, poising gleefully
Under a jetty tress, a charming neck.
Gazing on ebony and ivory,
A verse of André Chenier rose to mind,
A verse well-nigh unknown, a sweet refrain,
Unstudied as a chance, but dreamed about.
I dare recall it listening to Molière;
Surely his mighty shade took no offense;
Listening the while, I softly murmured,
Seeing the child, who never dreamed of it:
"Oh, lovely head, the white neck, delicate,
Effaces all the glory of the snow."

Again I mused (so strange is reverie)
On freedom of old times, forgotten now,
With polished point and ceaseless mockery,
That proves indeed we beggars are at heart;
But surely 'twas a sad and shameful thing,
This very solitude around Molière,
And that 'tis "surely time," as says the song,
To leave the century, or put it right;
To what shall we compare the theater,
Whose muse is but a painted courtesan?
Cowardice palsies us, and dunces strut about,
Proclaiming the fruition of all things,
As though the myriad ills that trouble us
Were not made young again each coming year.

Our century has its errors and its truth;
He that is bold to blame as well as praise,
Is sure of audience wheresoe'er he goes.

Ah, I'd speak loud, were I assured of wit;
The whip of satire I'd be bold to lift,
And clothe in mourning robes your Brummels gay,
And lash the selfish horde in written verse.
Could Juvenal return to Paris now,
Here would he find far more to stir his wrath
Than a vile woman, or a sonnet worse;
We've other things than these to load our shelves.
O master of us all, whose grave is locked,
Let me thine ashes but reanimate,
And moment kindle, and I'll imitate!
If this I could attempt, 'twere work enough.
Teach me with what full tones thy fearless mouth
Spoke truth aloud, sole passion of thy heart,
And audience to compel if genius failed,
Thy courage and thy wrath would then be mine.

'Twas thus that I caressed my chimera,
While there in front of me, at mother's side,
Still sat the pretty child, whose white, smooth neck,
Under her dark locks moved so tenderly.
The play came to its end; the sweet unknown
Arose. The neck and shoulder, demi-nude,
Enveiled themselves; the hand crept in the sleeve;

And when within the portal of her home
I saw her vanish, knew I'd followed her.
Alas! beloved friend, that's all my life.
While all my spirit yearned for its domain,
My captive body followed beauty's train;
And when I wakened from this reverie,
Nothing remained except the image dear.
" Oh, lovely head, the white neck, delicate,
Effaces all the glory of the snow."

IDYL

Tell us in what our evening should be spent,
Our supper done, and this the time of Lent;
So spoke the two by ties of friendship knit.
What conversation choose we, apt and fit
And gay, with wine to counsel give, and wit?
Rudolph. Talk we of love, for beauty, liberty,
And joy. The gods that dearest seem to me,
Clink glass, a joyous idyl we begin.
Old Virgil's shepherds, with their piping thin,
Hail poesy o'er mead to cooling groves within.
Sunlit cicadas sing with merry din,
With humbler voice, inspired by passing chance.
We sing like crickets by the hearth-fire's glance.
Albert. Do what you like, for sometimes in this life
A song may lull and aid us in the strife;
And should we shock the poesy antique,
Her shadow oft is sweet to them who seek.
Rudolph. Rosalie, the name that men to her accord,
Dark little one, and I, through chance, her lord.
Her name delights; when I that name repeat,
I feel it graven there with each heart-beat.

Albert. I cannot in such tones sing of my dear,
Though her name, too, is charming to the ear;
Harm it so much I could not without shame,
And in one word my life's own secret name.
Rudolph. How many are capricious fortune's charms!
One loving look, we sought each other's arms.
It was Shrove-Tuesday, at a masquerade,
We supped, while Frolic with her rattle played;
From brimming glass our nascent love would come,
Like Venus sprung of yore from ocean's foam.
Albert. What mysteries profound in human woe!
When 'neath the chestnut-trees I saw her go,
Her mother with her, slowly to the gate,
(Her brow so pure, her every look sedate!)
Be heaven my witness, from the earliest glance
I saw in love a painful, useless chance,
And yet my heart felt pleasant bitterness,
To know of love and suffer none the less.
Rudolph. Since by my pillow laughed that playful face,
At once it can both sleep and worry chase.
Kisses resound, the time in pleasure flies;
Our bed of flowers always untroubled lies.
Albert. Since in her eyes my torturing love was born,
No one knows with what torment I am torn.

She knows not, and only hope is nigh
That she one day may guess, the day I die.
Rudolph. When my enchantress opes her eyelids bright,
Pure as a star, and darker than the night,
Black diamonds through eyes' enamel shine.
Albert. Like drop of rain upon a floweret vine,
Like starlit dim aloft the firmament,
My sweetheart's glance, a shining element.
Rudolph. Her front is not more broad than Venus' brow;
A ribbon knot confirms two bands enow
To round it sweetly with an aureole;
And when along the bed her tresses roll,
I seem to see in many a loving curl
The gay mantilla of some Spanish girl.
Albert. That happiness my eyes has ne'er bestead,
To see so well my fair beloved's head.
The sanctuary where her thought is found,
A golden diadem has ever crowned.
Rudolph. At morning see her warbling hop and skip,
Her heart a bird, and blossoms on her lip.
Here I can catch my idle, lazy child,
And on the purple, 'mid her laughter wild,
Inhale the fresh, intoxicating breath.
Albert. Once I was near her, day was near its death;

Sleep seemed to come, and she was fairer seen.
On me she bent her brow with languid mien,
And as we see a sleeping, opening rose,
In one faint sigh, I felt her lips unclose;
I felt the perfume of the heart exhale.
Rudolph. Would I could see my forward beauty frail,
Fresh from the wine-shop, giddy with champagne,
Come in short skirts and grasp your arms amain;
Your melancholy then would stay, or go?
For anything befalls in worlds below.
Albert. If my dear mistress' penetrating look
On yours to rest could but one moment look,
Where would this mad intoxication be?
To love is something, and all else is naught.
Rudolph. No, love which speaks not is a reverie;
Silence is death, and love is life; in fine,
It is an ancient lie made by design,
Belief in bliss, without a sensual joy!
Your trouble takes me not, nor yet annoys.
Hazard is there, the venturesome to aid;
And they whom fear has wholly hopeless made,
Deserve their fate, the gods above they blame.
Albert. No, when their boundless soul to nature came,
The gods have not said all, to matter crude,
Which then received their form and fairer stood.

It is a vision, this reality,
No, broken glasses, with an empty word
Spoken at random, answer hardly heard,
A frivolous laugh between two kisses set,
A moment's contact with an unknown pet.
This is not love; it is not yet a dream,
Desire gives satiety no gleam,
But gives disgust so sickening to the heart,
For, pleasure gone, it is of pain a part.

Rudolph. Is't pain, or pain of pleasure, in an alcove warm,
With steaming punch against the weather's storm?
Is't pain, or joy, carnation of the pink,
And alabaster white, spring graces link?
And were reality an image bright,
Of things below, an empty outline light,
Then keep me, Heaven, from any clearer sight!
So charming is the mask, I dread the face,
And, even in carnival, elude embrace.

Albert. One tear says more than you could ever say.

Rudolph. Its price it has, sister of smiling, gay:
With chattering eyes to chatter I am prone,
But genuine language speaks in kiss alone.

Albert. So, then, unheeding spend your idle hour.
Secret my own! Our griefs have gentle power.

Rudolph. So, then, at your caprice, your sadness air;
Oh, suppose mine! You must man's slander bear.
Albert. Beware, withal, lest your gay, giddy chit,
Lose all her mirth in some annoying fit.
Rudolph. Beware, withal, lest your sweet, drowsy rose,
Catch butterflies at summer evening's close.
Albert. Bright fires of day the gloom of night surpass.
Rudolph. Leave our dispute and drain we one more glass.
We love, enough; let each man have his fling;
Many I've known, and that old song can sing.
With strong men stands the law, in love, in fight;
The woman of our choice is always right.

1832.

DUPONT AND DURAND

A DIALOGUE

Durand. Shades of my fathers, what dilemma mine!
I would invoke a god, if I knew one.
I've been for nearly thirty years on earth,
And wasted ten to find a publisher.
No living soul has read my manuscripts,
And I alone know what my writings are.
Dupont. By shade of Brutus, what a grievous state!
On cider and potatoes I have dined.
My soul is thus benumbed, to waken me
No one is fitted; quoting Fourier,
"What times are these!" What lamentable feast!
Durand. Whom see I yonder? Who's that starveling wretch
Who blows his icy fingers with despair,
And, shivering, prowls beneath his thin black coat?
I've seen at Flicoteau's this piteous man.
Dupont. I'm not mistaken. That insipid face,
That somber eye, and that dejected brow,
That greasy hair, that large and worn-out hat—

It is my friend Durand, my comrade old.
Durand. Is it you, dear Dupont? Good Pylades,
Friend of my youth, embrace as man and man.
You're not yet at the sanitarium?
I thought your family kept you in Bicêtre.
Dupont. Speak low. I jumped this evening from my room,
And furtively I would a pamphlet write.
But you, you have your bed at Charenton,
As I've been told.
Durand. Ah, how the world, Dupont, loves to malign!
What an ungrateful beast this human race!
And with what trouble one must make his way!
Dupont. Brother, how well I know it! In our day,
Only too well I've known the worth of men.
The world each day becomes more obstinate,
And deeper falls in imbecility.
Durand. Do you remember, Dupont, childhood days,
When, rich with pride and poor of science, we
Were flogged by an assistant, idle still,
We slept in ignorance and oblivion?
How dear to memory are those pleasant days!
Dupont. Idle! You've said it. We were that indeed.
Ignorant, God knows! What I have done since then

Has clearly shown if I've learned anything.
But what sweet perfume the refectory
Had in those days, when I could eat and drink!
Bowed o'er my desk, I still in secret read
Old novels bought at infinite low price.
Barnave and Desmoulins I violently craved;
Of Saint-Just the touching works
Rested upon my heart; I walked abroad
With dignity of Roman senator.
You shared my fate: you failed to study, too.
Durand. 'Tis true that genius has vicissitudes.
My Ossianic head should laurels wear,
But with fool's cap at times was crowned.
But even then one saw that I was capable;
I had for scribbling a rage intense;
Despised by comrades, bruiséd by their fists,
Aside I rhymed, within a corner crouched.
Then, at fifteen, reading was difficult,
Yet Schiller, Dante, Shakespeare I devoured.
My forehead trembled as I read their works.
As to those rakes that former times admired,
Virgil, and Horace, Homer, Cicero,
We know, thank God! just what to think of
them.
Then quick to learn the art poetical,
My lisping muse began to plagiarize;
And then, in turn, I worshiped England, Spain,
And Italy, and, chiefly, Germany.
What would I not have done to know the dialect
The cobbler Sachs had gloried years a-gone!

I surely would have written something great,
But forced to speak our ignoble tongue,
I've sworn, at least as long as I may live,
I'll never write a book in proper French.
You know me that I always keep my word.
Dupont. When winter comes the swallow flies away;
And thus has flown the all too short a time
When fasting stomachs count upon the teeth.
How fine the bread the housewife used to cut!
Durand. No more about it; life is but misery.
Be honest, tell me of your history.
What did you when you left *Latin Quartier?*
Dupont. What did I?
Durand. Yes, tell me, I implore you, of your fate.
Dupont. Hey! my friend, what do I know?
I did as birds do when they leave their nest;
I did what chance would do; what God allowed.
Durand. But what was that?
Dupont. Nothing at all. I wandered in the streets;
My nose I followed, gazing at the stars;
Was badly fed and clad, and slept in lofts,
From which I moved as soon as I was asked;
And thus, to many hovels did I go,
Thinking of Fourier's consoling dream;
Borrowing from all the most I could obtain,
Spending a franc as soon as I one grasped,
Putting great words into insipid phrase,

Sockless and spiritless, my pockets void,
My mind as hollow as my pocket, too;
And thus I lived, a tattered sycophant,
By all rejected, by the world unsought.
Durand. I know it. Fearing you should die sometimes,
When that your stomach cried out, "Six o'clock!"
I've slipped within your hand, with some regret,
Five francs you promptly lost at baccarat.
But tell me, you did not, I think, of late
Lead such a terrible and aimless life?
Dupont. I call to witness Brutus and the rest,
That I have never had a coat but this!
How could I change? To whom is justice done,
Where naught is seen but interest, avarice?
I have a project, which I'll whisper low;
I hope, indeed, you will not speak of it;
'Tis finer than Lycurgus ever dreamed,
If only L'Avocat will publish it.
The world, it must be revolutionized,
And nothing of the past must then exist;
The rich will beggars be, and nobles, ignoble;
Our ills will be our wealth; our men, women;
The women will be—anything they wish;
The oldest enemies are reconciled—
Russia with Turkey and England with France;
Religious faith have fullest liberty,
And modern drama shall have common sense.
Of kings and deputies we'll do without;

All laws will be abolished, and the tribe
Of choleric magistrates will be suppressed.
And, furthermore, all marriage ties
And family complications are annulled.
That's it. And as for children, who will care
To find their fathers, they are ever dear.
Besides, in all the country-side will ne'er be seen
No mountains, nor the vales that lie between.
All songs will be suppressed—they are accursed;
We'll burn them, and imprison those who sing.
And everywhere are coal and bitumen;
Sidewalks and hovels, fields abloom with beans,
Carrots, and peas, that whoso will may fast;
But none, at least, will riotously dine.
Of two steel rails, a road magnificent
From Paris to Pekin will gird the land,
Ruled by the grand republic of my choice,
Where jargon of a hundred races clash
To make a Babel of enormous growth.
There on a fiery wheel, steam-driven cars
Will wear to solid rock the good old earth.
And from whose windows every passenger
Will see only a sea of cabbages,
And every landscape, pretty as a park.
In that humanitarian era, wrought by me,
The shaven globe, without a beard or hair,
Like a great pumpkin will revolve in space.
This project, friend, 's an admirable thing!
For what to my designs can be compared?
In my spare moments I've indited it.

Would you believe, Durand, that none has read,
Or cared to read, this propaganda fine?
Alas! our century, eyes and ears has none.
Show it such wonders, and it makes a face,
And on the Bourse will deal in stocks.
Some make our laws, and others make canals;
But all love pleasure, money, and a meal.
Our human hogs go plowing up the ground;
Our citizens they burst in ignorance;
I've lost the hope of educating them.
But you, what was your fate? Now, be sincere.
Durand. At first I for veterinary worked,
For eighteen miserable francs a month.
You know it was distasteful I should kneel
To grease the foot of this or that strange beast,
That many times repaid me with a kick.
Tired of the trade, I broke my halter there.
With hope in God, I went knowing not where.
I worked awhile for publisher of prints,
Who for some novels made the tail-pieces.
I made them for two years: in wretched want,
I could design more wretched pencilings.
In time my mind became a parasite;
I stole ideas, and became a graft
On other's labor; my apprenticeship
Dragged on until the day I dined at Tuile's;
And there I met Dubois, the vaudevillist,
Great drinker, as 'tis known, with mighty lungs,
Whose vinous glee made every tavern roar;
He taught me spelling and improved my style.

Between us we composed a gay vaudeville,
Which was presented to the traveling shows,
But ever was unanimously refused.
Ah, these rebuffs were maddening. I roared!
The ebullition set my barren brains
On fire. I thenceforth swore to write
Some kind of work, and to astound Paree.
By madness of mere rhyming, my dull brain
In time got hold of semblance of a thought.
I locked the door, and borrowed all the books
Of writers who could poetry inspire;
Sixty octavos were the incentive strong.
I slowly brought forth a most fearful poem.
The moon and sun fought in my stanzas fierce;
In them Venus with Christ danced in Hades.
See how recondite was my labored thought:
To write the masterpiece of earth and heaven,
Such was my aim; Brahma and Jupiter,
With Plato, Job, Marmontel, and Bossuet,
Vitellus, Nero, and mad Antony,
All strove in passages rhetorical.
The work it was immensity itself.
The vital point of this abnormal song
Was lizards singing on the water's edge,
Green lizards cachinnating a refrain.
Racine is but a wag compared to me.
I was not understood; vast symbol lay
Without interpretation in the page.
Dusty, but still virgin, is my song.
Ye gods! it is a sad virginity!

But Heaven to other fates was leading me.
I met a crabbed and aged journalist,
A charlatan, and seminarist, too,
Who cheaply sold the reputations made
By honest men, for half a franc or more.
I donned the livery of this blathering fraud,
And sold my satire for a scanty wage.
Gall was still oozing from my thirsty pen;
I felt new life in me, and bit the heels
Of fledgling poets and philosophers.
Ah, dear Dupont, how sweet to cut and slash,
To minds unwrought with imbecility!
How sweet to be eternally revenged
On one who has attained some true success!
Sweet to go home and eat a scanty meal,
And then cut up your man and tramp on him,
And pour upon his miserable head
The gall of your own ink-well; 'tis a curse
Most sweet to critics heretofore unknown,
Lying anonymously—what happiness!
Writers and deputies, ministers,
Yea, kings and presidents, and God himself,
I've all caluminated in my wrath.
Unfortunate were those who vied with me.
For did a secret story circulate,
I quickly printed it in my gazette,
And nothing, from the street to drawing-room,
Escaped me, for I played the jackal keen.
In times of scandal I was well informed;
No lamentations nor a fear of clique,

Made me suppress that vileness. Yes, I loved
To riot in the feverish rottenness.
You dream, Dupont; what are you thinking of?
Dupont. Ah, dear Durand! if I had woman's heart,
Who could with love give comfort to great soul!
But no, my graces I in vain display;
My person, like your writings, of no worth;
I offer it to all, and no one partakes;
On my deserted couch I lie, and groan,
And wait, yet nothing comes. I ought to drown!
Durand. Do you sometimes at night amuse yourself?
Dupont. I oft play dominoes, if nothing else.
Durand. My faith, fine game! How it expands the mind!
He's not a man who'd blunder at the game,
But at the right time call out "Domino!"
Let's enter the café.
Dupont. You'll stake me fifteen sous, and no return?
What say you?
Durand. One moment. Let us start to play for drinks.
I'll drink at your expense—at least a glass.
Dupont. Liquors don't suit me; I like only beer.
What money have you got?
Durand. Three sous are all I have.

Dupont. Let's patronize the tavern, anyway.
Durand. After you.
Dupont. After you.
Durand. After you, if you please.

July, 1838.

SIMONE

Novels I loved at twenty years.
To-day no time for that appears.
Lost self will make a stingy man.
I see less far with clearer plan.
For Werther's loss I do not care,
Consoled by our good queen Navarre.
And wherefore not? Do you think, then,
That when one hath one page for pen,
He ought to seek a deal to write—
That so much talk is proper quite?
Which of the two's sterility?
Is it antique sobriety,
That what it thinks, alone indites;
Or our intemperate modern mote,
Who thinks he thinks, because he wrote?
Thanks be to God that men of mind
This year are not so rare to find!
When one idea begins to pound,
No bigger than a petty hound,
An ass we make it by the sound.
Th' ideas, a woman good and pure;
The book, a courtesan for sure.
Indeed, so oft the Florentine
Wrote out a tale, one morning keen,

Without dropping or mending pen,
He might have made a volume then
From one chaste word, or libertine.
The dame of fearless soul and gay,
Who mourned, who wept Pavia's day,
And in her lifetime's fairest hour
Left France, left loves and all their flower,
Her brother's grief to soothe amid
The gloom of prison in Madrid,
Think you she was not fit to do
A novel like Scudéry, too?
She rather would make known the tear,
The sorrow which her heart held dear,
The merry jest, a moment's cheer;
And those who read her pleasant book
Appreciative pleasure took.
As connoisseurs good word would give,
Those people well knew how to live,
Escaping death, as well we see,
At Rebec, at Fontarabie,
At la Bicoque, at Marignas;
For then the only true romance
Was truest love for one's country;
Guarding it well, true bravery.
But now, no longer we must prose;
No satire this I would compose;
I merely want to put in rhyme
A history of that old time.

The men of brains, and happy folk,
Submit but ill to love's firm yoke.

All this fine world has much to do.
The poor in all of more value.
To them hath Jesus giv'n the skies,
While here on earth 'tis love they prize.
In a fair land, by Tuscan shore,
In good old times there lived of yore
The child so poor, of needy sire;
A child she was of humble rank,
Passably pretty, young and frank,
Engaging, sweet in every thought;
Of money she had no farthing brought,
And so her living slowly earned
With wool, as spinning-wheel she turned.
Of morrows heedless, fate she spurned
Because she could with labor full
Just get her living with this wool.
She found her way to have a heart,
And in her Tuscan head a part
For joy and pain a home afford.
It was not any mighty lord
Who longed for her; you fancy can
A handsome boy, a comely man,
Who came there oft upon his task
To bring the wool the wheel doth ask,
His master wanted turned to cloth.
Pascal the name was of the youth,
Who as he passed his youthful days
From time to time his love displays.
Be it for want of knowing well,
Be it she could no evil spell,

The hour when Pascal was to call
Found Simone at the window small.
There answering him as best she could,
Not asking more, she calmly stood,
And seeing all his youth and joy,
She turned her face upon the boy,
And eyes that looked with pleasure coy.
When he was gone, the wheel would run;
With all her heart she spun and spun,
And dreamed, more patient hope to win
Of him by whom the wool came in;
And leaning, softly kissed the wheel,
And ditties sang, her joy to seal.
The boy, on his part, quickly showed
From day to day a jealous mode
About his wool, and nothing found.
(In Simone what charms abound!)
Done sooner now, or yet so well,
As spindle by her hand unwound
She spun, and he to sighing fell,
While season's flowers around them dwell.
In fine, as in this world so sweet,
No herb so small beneath our feet,
That one spring day is not to teem,
No friendship can so fleeting seem
As not to breed an amorette.
One day the spindle was upset—
Fell to the floor. The girl, in sooth,
Fell in the arms of lusty youth.

Near to the barriers of the town
Lay then a handsome garden's crown,
A charming spot, asylum lone,
Morning and evening closed to none.
The scholar, in his hand a book,
The dreamer, with his idle look,
The lover, with his mistress nice,
Came in as into paradise.
For freedom was in times of yore
In Italy a treasured store,
Like music and the lover's love.
The good Pascal desired one spring
To this fair spot his love to bring,
Not to dream, improve his mind,
But merely seek, and haply find,
Some bench half-hidden in a nook,
Where they could speak no words of book,
But only secrets which the bird
Among the leaves to tell is heard.
Soon was it formed, and fixed as soon;
The plan was but a pleasing boon
To her who spun, the fair brunette,
The trysting for a Sunday set;
She having told her father dear
That she had formed a purpose clear
To say her prayers at old Saint Gal.
At the spot marked, full light and sweet,
She hastened her Pascal to meet.
Before she opened her campaign,
It must be known that she had ta'en,

According to the country's rule,
A neighbor for companion cool;
It is not there, as at Paree,
Love goeth not without ami.
Sure is it that the neighbor wrought
More trouble than the good she brought.
Good-looking, ugly, all the same:
Boccaccio calls Lagine her name.
The young man at the same resort
Arrived with parallel escort,
A neighbor, one surnamed the Strambe,
Which means to say, I squinter am;
For though he did not halt a peg,
He squinted somewhat, had one leg.
But never mind. Within the park
The couples, spark took hand of spark;
The neighbor with the neighbor blent,
And each upon his own way went.
And while the Strambe and his Lagine
In sun's full glare to walk were seen,
Seeking to tie some bits of love
Beneath the boughs of trees above,
Pascal, with her he loved so well,
From seeking soon to finding fell,
A little tufted, grassy heap,
With fortune fit her pledge to keep.
And how the hour was passed away,
The one who knows alone can say.
Two loving arms as white as milk,
Curtain of green, the moss-bed's silk,

Ah, life! alas! 'Tis this, I weet,
That makes it cruel, makes it sweet.
And chance would have it that this spot
Was in a sloping grassy plot.
That here and there, as pleased God,
Ran fresh with flowers, a grassy sod.
Pleasure like this will always bring
A moment spent in chattering;
Always, whene'er we loving are,
For otherwise our happy care
Sinks without hopes, or memories fair.
Our lovers sitting in the grass
While laughing, kisses 'twixt them pass;
Begin to talk of a new scheme;
A copious dinner is the dream.
On this same place, at leisure, too,
More dear the spot already grew;
Already needs they come anew.
While chatting thus beneath the screen,
By chance the boy of lusty mien
Had plucked a flower from off the green.
What flower? What brush? The luckless lad
Knew not the name—my plight as bad.
He could not dream of perils there,
And put it with an absent air
Against his lips, all burning still
With kisses which his longing fill,
Exchanged still with relish warm,
Without a thought of fear or harm,

They each of them were much caressed,
Then for a while he seemed to rest,
Keeping the herb between his teeth;
Not long it hung his lip beneath,
When all at once his face did change.
About the briar, dying, strange,
He raised his head with sudden force,
Calling Simone, with utterance hoarse;
Now wrapped in an eternal shade,
He stretched his hand, her hand to stay,
Lost use of tongue, a dead man lay.
The fact, indeed, was very clear
Of sudden death, the death we fear.
Our poor Simone could not at first
Compose herself to think the worst,
The utter loss of her dear friend;
To die is still a bitter end,
Though farewell plaint, or prayer we send.
Trembling she rose, and called to him,
Imagining his senses dim,
Asleep from quickly passing pain,
And caught him where he faint had lain,
No lover now, but brother true.
What could be done? The poor folk knew,
By dint of desperate suffering,
Preserving still, that precious thing,
Their only blessing, treasured hope,
With death that comes they can not cope.
The specter with his blighting hand
Had set already livid brand

Upon the almost living man.
The shining eyes, the lips caressed,
That now in masking blood were dressed;
Marked deeply with the Furies' lash,
That frame whose breath went like a flash.
Once beautiful, and love so deep,
Soon lies, dread object, horrid heap,
So that the sense of living girl
With horror seemed to reel and whirl.

Simone shrieked, and to the cry
Came Strambe running, Lagine nigh,
And by ill-luck the cries arouse
Some people in a neighboring house.
When people come together so,
They come to look at ruin's blow;
And here, indeed, this was the case.
Those who first came with eager pace,
Beheld Simone stretched like dead,
And lying near her Pascal's head,
So that one moment they believed
That, from some cause not yet conceived,
The two together had expired.
Would God they had! Such death desired
Has been a sweet and welcome prize.
But Simone reopened her eyes.
" You wretched girl! " the lame man said,
And looked at him who lay there dead;
" You are the one that slew my friend! "
At this astounded, people wend

In crowds, with angry shout and brawl,
And soon the doctor duly call.
He sees the body, gives his care,
Observes, and then his lips declare
That Pascal has been poisoned.
But Simone, with all they said,
Can only feel her inmost grief,
And holds her head to find relief;
Sat motionless, without a groan,
More silent than the mute tombstone.
Who ought to speak? No doubt Lagine,
Such act of courage feminine
Had been an act of nobleness.
But what she did, you well may guess:
She held her peace for want of heart,
And though she saw the crimeful part
Given her companion and her friend,
She failed her pitying love to lend,
And felt but fear of her sad state.
And thus Simone, unfortunate,
Alone and helpless, 'gainst them all,
The girl they will to trial call.
And there upon her knees she fell,
Bathed in the tears that warmly well,
And more than half condemned to die.
Fit was the judge that case to try.
He heard, could not convinced be,
Suspected there some mystery,
And wanted no delay to be,
The case forthwith from doubt to free.

Imagination to his mind
Could ne'er this woman guilty find,
When he beheld the tears she shed,
Nor could it find the young man dead
Without a cause established.
He took Simone by the hand,
And going forth with all that band,
Spoke not, but to the garden came;
He chose the girl to lead a way
To the departed, where he lay,
That she might so herself defend,
And 'fore his eyes the truth commend,
And show the way his death befell,
And then sad memories to tell.
And calling up her faithful love,
From first to last Simone wove
The little history I strove
To tell you in the words above,
And better still, for tears are true.
The simple tale no one believed,
And when the maid set forth to view
What chance Pascal of life bereaved,
And what misfortune yet unheard,
Seeing the crowd by doubting stirred,
Seeing the judge begin to smile,
To prove her story free from guile,
She stepped out toward the little tree
'Neath which her lover she could see.
Asleep, too pale to recognize;
Plucking a flower of that same guise,

Resembling that her darling friend
Against his lips had rashly placed,
One thought her wretched soul doth rend.
It was to take the path he traced.
Grief was it? Fear, or ignorance?
What matters it? Pascal awaits,
Spreads out his arms before her glance
From that asylum's tranquil gates
Whose inmates no misfortune fear.
Now, as the blossom touched her face,
She died! Ye souls in blissful grace,
On whom this favor God bestows,
To journey hence before Love's close,
Again upon the threshold meet,
This one with joy whose grief was greet,
To send at once a hapless death
With kisses here upon this earth,
And, disappearing suddenly,
To love forever there on high!

And now, what kind of deadly plant
Has power to drag, in one instant,
The lover hence from his delight,
His sweetheart from despair's grim spite?
Boccaccio says in words a few;
Accustomed, simple, ever new,
That all the cause of many ills
Was venom, which a toad distils
Into some sage. But thanks to God,
We know too well old wisdom's fraud

To hold the errors of our sires;
Had he a hundred viper foes,
A child would laugh, and to their nose,
When people are in poison's blight,
In this our century of light,
We don't believe the tale is right.
One bone were all that could be found;
That bone must issue from the ground,
Must prove, some notary before,
That death came on in such a guise,
At such an hour, not otherwise.
My poor goodman of old Florence,
To whom, to clearest appearance,
Within the outskirts of the town
The tale was told to do you brown;
Who could believe it here in France?
Good folks who laugh, so then laugh you;
This is not less a history true.
Seek for the plant and find it out;
Perhaps to-morrow sees it sprout
Along some path or in some hedge.
The faculty will then allege
'Tis poppy, hemlock, belladone.
Now here below all we can prove
The rarest is, no treasure trove,
Nor yet the plant—it is Simone.

October, 1840.

THE PRESS LAW

I

I VALUE not the politician band;
Love not the public squares where idly stand
The men who wrangling turn to every wind;
I do not seek, shop-window glass behind,
The shameless broadsides tainting passers-by,
And blighting modesty in childhood's eye.

II

That men are always equal here on earth
I do not see. What gave the nation birth?
I was not born of blood republican,
Have never been, thank God! a pamphlet man.
I'm not of those who make their hunger lie,
And who for bread wallow in every sty.

III

For partisan, too well I love my ease;
As stallion in a stud I would not please;
My maiden Muse writes nothing on her brow;
God, mother, mistress, I have served till now,
And from what path whereon my youth may reel
No mire, no gravel sticks to clog my heel.

IV

Upon the bloody stone I have bowed low,
Hot still from superhuman murder's blow,
When France, in horror throbbing and in joys,
Beheld a father grasping both his boys,
Amid the flashings of the fiery wall,
Guided by Destiny's imperious call.

V

I prayed, I wept, of impious times a child;
At Notre Dame, one day 'fore Saviour mild,
A queen, a mother, who for safety fears
With head bowed down, face him and worn with tears
Approached to pray the angel of the land
For all her children, blessed, in God's dread hand.

VI

From holy freedom license yet may burst—
A well-known plague, of all the plagues the worst.
A bandit may be hero's base-born son.
The sun of France is, faith, a burning one.
Brightness intense projects a shade immense;
God willed great good should cause some woes intense.

VII

The truth is, theaters, and Press also,
In these our times make oft a hideous show,

And in the open street we shut our eyes;
A vile contempt warps us in every wise;
The Muse in our times ne'er as priestess comes,
But bacchante; gods and men prefer the slums.

VIII

It is the truth that, just emancipate,
Human intelligence, a slave of late,
Has with one daring flight portentous soared;
Our men have stained a once more valiant sword—
Free speech, the weapon of God's tempering old,
Which henceforth ages bear with blade of gold.

IX

It is the truth, France talks without reason.
To idlers, as at Lacedæmon,
The frightful show she gives a drunken slave,
For we have drunk of purest wine and brave,
And, like the vine-man by the vine-branch crowned,
We seek the vintage and go staggering round.

X

But thunder! He is deaf, or else a stake,
The man who says naught of the law they make!
The deputies are aiming at effect,
For God's sake, if emotions so affect,
Be common, low, as men are in the street.
Thus La Bruyère, a judge without conceit.

XI

A Press law! Oh, you silly, booby laws!
The laws, eh? How the word fills full my jaws!
Maternal law, which opens arms to me!
A law, note well, should not repressive be,
But inoppressive. Law, like hypocrites,
A little law with little steps it flits.

XII

A charming law, becoming, decent, free,
Which covers every breast one could not see.
You may write all, with every confidence;
All that they ask to know is your intents.
Intention is the point. Their mercy spy!
The law doth scent; if words smell bad, good-by!

XIII

Have you insulted, with some raillery,
Those representing high society?
Have you spoke ill of peer, or deputy?
The gravest fault has right of seigneury;
The peers shall judge you, if the peers so sue;
If not, the country, counted and made new.

XIV

Have you compared, in any theory,
State of republic with the royalty?
Have you, then, dreamed a dream, and the country
Informed what one day will your wishes be?

The peers shall judge you, if the peers so sue;
If not, the country, counted and made new.

XV

Have you a place, or little industry,
From which those July days have made you flee
Regretted servant of a master fled?
Dare you to exile bow a flattering head?
The peers shall judge you, if the peers so sue;
If not, the country, counted and made new.

XVI

And might you not construct with hearty glee,
Within your villa, or some *métairie*,
A little show upon a pair of boards?
You'll see the saddle given you by your lords!
The peers shall judge you, if the peers so sue;
If not, the country, counted and made new.

XVII

The minister declared in the tribune
That art was lost, our taste was in a swoon;
That for the stage the law was requisite;
That once French eloquence was common quite.
In France, to-day, no eloquence we hear;
On hearing him, the thing indeed seemed clear.

XVIII

I fain would know, to make it all more clear,
What is this taste which now we hold so dear?

Taste! Always taste! When I was yet a boy
I had a tutor talking with this joy.
Since Homer's death there are three thousand
years;
In those three thousand, as I see, appears

XIX

A single age of taste, oft called the great,
That of Boileau, when Corneille walked in state.
But, Monsieur Thiers, this earth is very old,
So let that age be fine, be grand, of gold;
I would not give to it an evil name;
And, devil take it! 'tis an age the same.

XX

One age a law for all in history?
Because three pedants stuffed my memory
With sundry verses, learned against the grain,
One age alone, one land must ever reign?
If it is glorious, may it glorious sleep,
That woful age! To mine I mean to keep.

XXI

And what the epoch when we live, you claim?
Under the king, Louis Fourteenth by name?
Then periwigged, depart for Trianon,
Become the flowers of love and gallant *ton.*
Come now, decide, dear Monsieur Thiers; if not,
Leave us our world, leave us our life and lot.

XXII

And could it be that that much-vaunted taste
Is in your eyes but some old custom's waste?
Could you not think it impost brought from
Greece?
That well might be. To think you never cease,
I bet, that this great taste, and all your fuss,
From ancient, sacred times comes down to us.

XXIII

The year of eighty-fifth Olympiad
(This was, you know, the time of Alcibiade,
And that of Pericles and Plato too),
There lived an old man, of the surly crew;
But you must know him and his name you know—
Aristophanes, noisy Cleon's foe.

XXIV

You'll read him, Monsieur Thiers, that genius
rude;
But little grace and taste he understood.
Before the Academy, at parting day,
They saw him lay his hand to temple gray,
Beneath the shades of yew and poplar white;
The age that saw him was a maze of might.

XXV

When his keen eye explored the human face
To search the thought, he found the heart's own
trace,

But nothing showed except a mocking smile,
Until one day in Athens' face the while,
All smeared with lies, he came upon the stage,
Attacking archons in his conquering rage.

XXVI

By their right names he calls both man and
things;
From good and ill away the veil he flings;
His verses never spare the assembled crowd
That, from the stage, hears truth both hard and
loud;
And were he living with us in this age,
This law, perhaps, might tongue of his engage.

XXVII

" Ye giddy folk, that dwell in old Lutece,
What ails you now, what strange and drunken
peace
Makes you to stand and sleep? Where is my
stick?
Of what think you, you creatures, dead or quick?
You sleep; the press to gag they will not fail;
The house in travail bringeth forth a jail."

XXVIII

They banished in the barbarous times of yore;
Was exile better, worse than scaffold floor?
I know not; but upon the seas of life
They gave the banished man a sailor's strife.

To lose one's country seemed a sentence vile;
Now with the man the dungeon they exile.

XXIX

Just God! our prisoners go to colonize;
I wonder not Algiers we civilize.
The Mussulmans would cut each other's throats;
Our ocean unto Philadelphia floats
A marvel rare, unheard-of plant, a birth
Which we will make to sprout in foreign earth.

XXX

Look, look, ye peoples of a newer world!
See you not something o'er your ocean whirled?
Comes it not toward you from horizon line,
Leviathan, and with triple ensign?
You guess not what is moving on the surge,
For the first time a jail the billows urge.

XXXI

Americans, come, hasten to the strand!
Behold it, proud, and decked with flags, near land;
A torture new, baptizéd by the deep;
Your monsters coming here, safe cages keep.
Your turn has come. Now let the savage frame
Fix fiery eyes upon the men we tame.

XXXII

See you those convicts whom from that machine
We pull by twos to drop them decks between?

See you them fevered, lashed across the back,
And, slipping, fall along the sandy track?
Pursue! pursue! this world is out of breath,
For human genius has done worse than death.

XXXIII

What have they done to merit scourging rods?
Have they cut off their kings, upset their gods?
No. They compared two slaves, and also said
That Solon understood where justice led,
Not, as we see, to prefects of police,
And that a happy folk once lived in Greece.

XXIV

Poor souls, it is a crime! They love their thought,
Pale dreamers; they with fickle language wrought
The law of them one living corpse will mold.
Americans, pass on, while drooping heads ye hold!
And may sad Freedom, their affianced bride,
Give greeting as they come and kiss beside.

August, 1835.

SILVIA

It is then true that well complain you may,
You whose dark eye, as bright as festal day,
The whole world's fret could swiftly drive away?
What was the weight of all this care
Through which a drooping head you bear?
It is, I think, as heavy load
As crushed the little fabled wren;
This mighty crushing grief again
Recalls the reed that bending glowed;
And I am far from being the oak.
But tell me, you that in the other times—
Our sires so kindly lived in kindly climes—
Iris or Phyllis's name I almost spoke,
You know that in this bourgeois age
Still dare permit me in my rhymes
To call you godmother, I rage
To know if you can write me so,
And if you dreamed my answering page.
Know you that in your weary wo,
Without reflection, fair-haired one,
You scold me as you scold a friend?
My sloth is but the coward's fun,
You say. So be it, I must mend,

And set myself once more to work.
The bird, alas! regains his nest,
And ofttimes seeks his cage for rest.
Some think I would upon my laurels sleep;
Forgetful moments merit praise less deep;
And in my bed the laurels do not lurk.
This can not be affair of mine;
I only dozed, with many a nod,
Beside a sprig of vervain fine,
Whose perfume faintly touched the sod;
I plucked it as I dreamed supine.
I will confess, this guilty, silent spell,
This long repose, for which you scold me well,
Of idleness, or love, or nonchalance,
If not time lost, then was it no mischance.
Nay, more, it was my time of swift advance;
And if it be that my inconstant thought
Can clothe in fabled fiction's airy garb
The truth, which truth itself has taught,
Your charge of guilt you will discard.
Silence, the counselor, is free
To tear the veil from mystery;
And whoso wishes wise to speak,
First to be silent shall he seek.
And if he always holds his tongue,
Himself to life and loving flung,
What could he care for all things else?
And you, when took you count of days?
Since everything must go its ways,
It is mad avarice, I guess,

Like treasure we must safely keep,
Which e'en the wind away may sweep!
The best of this my life has passed a dream—
A dream so light it still doth seem.
My charming godmother, I turn to you;
Have you, then, fears of weary, humdrum life?
The winter it doth light the hearth anew,
And brings you dreams with newer visions rife.
You say a novel makes the soul more bright;
Poor thing, I think, 'twould be to send!
And why not ask La Fontaine's stories light?
With such a tale to read, we watch at night;
With that laid open at the pillow's end,
You see Aurora rise and radiance lend.
A prophet was Molière, I am convinced;
Things manifold shall live this time,
And children ever read the rime,
Of goodman's little stories dear,
With flower of wisdom and gay cheer.
But what! with fashion comes a want to kill.
We hear no more the sober language roll;
To teach its sweetness gave a ready skill.
The only French up-springing from the soul,
And no offense to Italy,
La Fontaine gave himself great toil,
To write a book that's no copy,
It sprang out of his native country's soil;
That laurel green that rises o'er his tomb,
Matches the ancients in its wealth of bloom.

Oh, my beloved patroness,
Just when your perfumed letter came,
Your boy, so spoiled with idleness,
Had had, without constraint or fear,
A talk with our great friend Shakespeare.
The author of the plot was Boccaccio,
For his invention's charm makes all things grow;
So then I must the Italian read.
I was alone, novella in hand;
Night's azure gleams began to lead
The play with morn's auroral band,
And glitter on the edge of gold,
'Neath which the Tuscan tales are told;
And I could think whate'er they say or do,
How true it is the Muses sisters are;
How sure it was that pencil's grateful hue,
Which shows them as on Parnassus afar,
Resembling spray of beauteous flower!
La Fontaine laughed with Boccaccio,
While Shakespeare's tears would rise and flow.
Would it be much to give my Muse the power
To try to render in my turn
A tale of love for loving book?
You would not such amusement spurn;
I would not try, except you look,
For it is much to try that style,
Forgotten now, but sweet the while,
And often thought a thing facile.

There was then in our old city,
By all the tales they tell me—
Boccaccio speaketh so; 'twas in Florence—
A merchant rich, a man of importance,
Who by his wife had but one child,
Whereon, almost immediately,
Arranging all his wealth up-piled,
From out this world he chanced to fly.
His wife survived; guardians were named,
A trusty folk, discreet, severe,
For winning honor justly famed
In keeping the estate in gear.
The young lad knew that neighborhood;
No tenderness his heart withstood
For one young girl as old as he,
Whose father was a tailor free;
And step by step the child became a man.
Time's breath old habit into love will fan;
And our Jerome, in similar way,
Must see his Silvia every day.
The girl, accustomed to his sight,
As she was loved, soon loved aright.
Of this his mother notice took;
Her son she scolded, brought to book,
And nothing gained by force or by address;
She thought, forsooth, the power of great riches
Should all things worldly change and break,
And orange-trees of bushes make.
She took the guardians aside,

And said: " You see the child, his pranks,
Not fourteen yet—to God be thanks! —
Will make my life in sorrow abide.
Infatuated through and through,
And with a hireling's daughter, too,
One of these days, if not restrained,
He'll make me wake, a grandmother.
Morning and evening, too, with her.
He calls her Silvia, I believe;
And if another in her arms he sees,
He'll waste away with love's unseen disease.
Needful it is, with your consent,
That on some journey he be sent;
Now he is young, the girl behaved,
She will forget, and both be saved,
And him we'll mate with some fine dame."
The lady, as the guardians said,
Spoke words of truth with wisdom wed.
" Now you are big," she told Jerome,
" 'Tis right for you to go from home.
Begone to Paris, spend a week
In seeing what all young men seek,
True courtesy, the life up there;
In course of time you homeward fare."
To this advice the youngster now
Replied that he would go nohow;
That he possessed sufficient sense,
Would learn to live in dear Florence.
And thereupon the mother raged,
Replying with a taunt at first,

And coaxing well the boy engaged;
With reasons, adjuration's burst,
Obedience to the guardians due,
And promises to hold him true
One year, no more. So hard they beg,
He yields at last to all this plague.
He leaves his land, love in his veins,
And, counting day and night, complains
Abandoning one-half of life.
Two years exiled, with all their strife;
But time and distance were indifferent urns;
Jerome to his Florentine home returns;
His love of Silvia again it burns.
A great mistake was this absence;
For while abroad journeyed the youth,
The girl had wed, so sad is truth.
Surveying now the Arno's banks,
He found there nothing but the tomb,
Forgotten hope's appointed doom
At first his heart in silence sank,
For in this point the world, he saw,
But seldom acts by other law.
Well he knew the unfaithful's door;
Each day he passed it once or more,
Expecting sign, or glance of eye,
Some trifle loved ones don't deny.
But every step he took was lost;
All thought of him away she tossed;
From which he felt a crushing grief,
And yet, before came death's relief

Of his remembrance, he would seek
And try withal himself to speak.
The husband was no jealous man,
Nor kept his wife beneath the ban.
One evening, when the newly-wed
Were at a neighbor's meeting late,
Into the house, when night grew great,
Crept Jerome, lurking near the bed;
Behind some cloth concealment sought.
The husband, now, at weaving wrought,
And used to weave that sort of veil
Which on the balcony they spread.
Home came the couple without fail,
And went forthwith to sleep in bed.
Now when he knew sleep had the pair,
Toward Silvia, Jerome groping there,
He lays his hand on her apart,
And whispers faint, " Sleep you, my heart? "
Poor child, she thought she saw a ghost,
And tried to shriek with fear inmost,
But said he, " I am your Jerome."
" For love of God, how could you come?
I beg you," said she, " go straight home.
Passed is that time of our short life
Of childhood friends, and hour of love;
You see me now a wedded wife,
And bound by duties far above.
It is henceforth, Jerome, my fitting choice
To see you not again, nor hear your voice.
And should my husband us surprise,

Think that the smallest of my woes
For me would be to lose repose.
You man and wife must recognize!"
At this rebuff the hapless swain
Felt broken heart and sinking soul.
His torture he described in vain,
His constancy and constant dole.
Neither by promise, nor by urgent prayer,
Could Jerome gain relief from grief and care.
Then, as he felt death coming near,
He begged that, as a final grace,
She let him lie and find a place,
One instant, close to her so dear.
He would not stir, he would not do her harm,
Only, so cold, he needed to be warm.
His heart had felt a deadly chill,
He swore to lie in silence still;
He swore to go away amain,
Never to see her face again.
The wife, pure-minded as a saint,
By the conditions thus inclined,
Was glad to satisfy his mind;
Her pity went to Jerome faint.
And down by Silvia he lay,
Considering then the friendship sway
Which he had kept for many a day,
Considering, too, her cruelty,
And hope forever gone astray,
He flew from suffering away,
For, gathering with one last gasp

All that remained of this life's might,
His darling's hand he willed to clasp,
And breathed his last in death's chill blight.
Now Silvia in strange surmise
Was wondering that he moveless lay,
And lying still in doubtful wise.
"Jerome, 'tis time—now go, I pray!"
She said at last; "'twill soon be day."
And as he broke not silence deep,
She thought that he had fallen asleep.
And rising partly then alone,
And speaking gently in low tone,
She stretched her hand toward him with motion nice,
And found him breathing not, but cold as ice.
She was astounded at the first,
Soon feeling him with stronger touch,
And fearing now the very worst,
Her trouble vain, and hope not much,
She tried to move the unconscious head.
Conviction came, her friend was dead.
What could she do? No easy task
To know at once, and she could ask
Advice her husband might bestow.
She roused him with a gentle blow.
She told him the sad story of Jerome,
As if the strange chance had but lately come,
To someone else; was dead elsewhere,
"In such a case," replied the man,
"It ought to be one's earliest care

To take the dead, soon as one can,
In secret home, and feel no spite.
The woman, faith, had done no sin;
To blame dame Fortune would be right."
"Then so to act must we begin,"
The woman said, and grasped his arm.
She made him touch, close by her head,
The body lying on their bed.
Although confused by this alarm,
The husband rose, the candle lit,
And, knowing well his wife's true faith,
He lifts the load and carries it
In secret home, and nothing saith.
He lays it down before the door,
As though asleep upon the ground.
Now people found, as light grew more,
The young man lying on the ground,
And there arose a great uproar
Of mother's wailing and despair.
The doctors consultation heard,
The body duly felt and stirred;
Unwounded, perfect every hair;
Each man in his own fashion spoke
Of fortune's strange and sudden stroke.
The popular opinion was
That love of woman was the cause
That flung poor Jerome into dire distress;
That he was dead of love in sheer sadness.
The truth, indeed, was nothing less.
The body now to church was borne,

And came there, too, mother forlorn,
And with her friends in mourning came,
And to a bitter grief gave vent.
Now while they bore the coffin by,
The weaver's soul was trouble-spent,
And worn by deep anxiety.
" 'Twere good," said he unto his dame,
" That you your mantle should put on,
And hear if any words of blame,
At burial of the young man gone
As to his death here in our house.
I somewhat dread lest they speak light
About his unforeseen decease,
And that would be an awkward plight;
We innocent are, and fond of peace.
I shall remain among the men,
To God shall pray, and hear them talk.
You keep the women in your ken,
As in their midst you slowly walk.
Remember you what these good souls
May say of us, and we may act
By what we hear, as fate controls."
Now Silvia's pity came, in fact,
Too late. The discourse was a passing knell:
" He might have lived," they said, " if love went well."
She yearned to see him, and she went,
Incredible, in darkness pent,
A thing that no man can explain,
Love's passing strange and mighty reign.

This heart, so chaste and so severe,
Which seemed a thing forever locked
When smiles of fortune beaming were,
Flew open when misfortunes knocked.
She hardly got within the church,
When horror and compassion search
For heart of Silvia. So at length
The ancient love awoke in strength.
With hanging head beneath her cloak's dark shroud,
She found her way amid that sorrowing crowd,
And pushing onward to the end,
She saw, beneath the purple pall,
Within the bier her loving friend.
She sank, and uttering one shriek,
As sister would a brother seek,
Upon the coffin came to fall.
As grief had slain the young Jerome,
So Silvia also died of grief.
This time it was the man to whom
It fell to give the bed's relief.
One near the other buried lay;
The two, divided in earth's day,
Were joined together. Death, which slew,
Had done what love could never do.

DECEMBER, 1839.

ADVICE TO A FAIR PARISIAN

Yes, were I a woman, charming and pretty,
I think I should do,
Fair Julia, as you;
Without fear or favor, distinction or pity,
Smile and make eyes
At all 'neath the skies.

In all the earth's orbit, my elegant waist,
And what I should wear,
Should be my sole care;
The puppet of most irreproachable taste,
Abroad or at home,
From Paris to Rome.

I would seek as the only true science and lore
That careless repose
Which you wear like a rose,
And to giddiness add as a grace the more
That semblance of thought
Which thinks about naught.

I would live in perpetual *fête,* and aspire
To dazzle the brain
Of even Disdain;
To be in one moment all ice and all fire,
With smiles to conceal
The hatred I feel.

Moreover, I would above all things eschew
That obsolete pink
From which our eyes shrink;
Amid my brown locks I would gleam on the view
Like a moonbeam white
From the hood of night.

How charming it is, and convenient besides,
This indolent way,
The style of the day,
And the pallor which nothing or everything hides;
Never too far apart
The face and the heart!

Your very caprice I would willingly share;
Your innocent sighs,
Your experienced eyes;
I adore you to such a degree, that I swear
I'd be wholly you
For a year or two.

On one single point, I am forced to confess,
Your habitual skill
Seems to serve you but ill:
You cannot endure to occasion distress;
From your pride you'd be freed—
But you want it, indeed.

My statue-like arm I should scruple to yield
To each and to all
At rout and at ball;
Nor in the cotillion's promiscuous field,
Resign my white hand
At every demand.

If I felt the clasp of a daring arm
Too rashly braced
Round my slender waist,
I confess I should be in mortal alarm
Lest my cobweb lace
Should show its trace.

Each partner in turn, o'er your shoulder white,
Recites his part
Of a broken heart;
If my dignity did not, my beauty might
Resent being wooed
In such careless mood.

No, if I were Julia, I would not see
In my cherished beauty
My only duty;
To the finger-tips I a duchess would be,
And treasure my pride
More than all beside.

For, my dear, at the present day, you must know
Most men that we find
Have a roving mind.

Of two lovers with ardent zeal all aglow
With one half I fear
It is pastime mere.

And if you would flirt, you must also be wise;
The swallow of spring
Who sleeps on the wing
Is not like the pinion of alien skies,
Which for farewell token
Leaves a flow'ret broken.

[From *Selections from the Prose and Poetry of Alfred de Musset*, copyright, 1870, by Hurd and Houghton.]

IDLENESS

TO M. BULOZ

"I SELDOM write, and so I like to do,
Still sloth with me is not of common hue;
But when my pen to write I would command,
Like galley-slave I take my oar in hand."

My dear, who, think you, talketh in this way?
'Tis Alfred, devil take me! you will say.
No, friend, would God that in such words so few,
So clear, I would have told my reason true!
The bold and lofty mind whose sober thought
In those rough lines to measured tread was brought,
(Now doff your hat!) was Mathurin Régnier,
Forerunner of th' immortal Molière,
Who bent our language, and whose waxen shapes
Not even Roman hyperbole escapes.
First master once, by whom I used to write,
A neighbor's counsel then I took for light,
And who was shown to me, when all's unknown,
By finer ones who imitate alone;

The cause was good, whate'er the outcome be;
He taught me how the open way to see.
Now I was asking in my solitude:
The fearless heart, without ingratitude,
Who lived and died in such a brave distress,
So silent then, what would he now express?
Then in my dream there rushed in rapid haste
Our vices, and our freaks, and all that paste
Of which he might have made, to our desire,
A dish to cheer us centuries entire.
At first, the plague which makes us all so sick
Is journalism, with its clownish trick—
This daily right which fools possess to fool
Some thousand others, fools of different school;
The editor into dictator turns,
And with the muddy ink that Fréron spurns,
The throne and everything is madly splashed.
And, secondly, our customs, more severe,
Because we hide, and rinse the glasses clear,
When we have done, in some dark, shameful nook,
The sins at which our sires to laughing took;
And then our pompous talk, our flowery prate,
European wit, of village cocks of late,
This finer art, politely to offend,
Cuffs parliamentary and kicks to send;
And then our still-born books; our wheezy schemes,
The food of lackeys; then those women things,
Who, wanting husband, or the coin he brings,

Contrive the work of bringing forth a scrawl.
And next a deeper ill, beliefs that fall;
And restless prayer's disheartened, erring call;
For him who clasps the hands and lifts the eyes,
A cross in dust, a desert in the skies;
And then, a shameful ill, the rattling coin
The brute enjoyment thinks the tone to join;
And drink and food, besotted selfishness,
Which rocks and snores in its own brutishness.
A modern tyrant comes, a novel plague,
Mediocrity, that finds itself the best,
To heat the vat in which the iron seethes,
Would cast therein bronze Cæsar and his wreaths;
The temper of the cliques, the butcher's smell,
Which, like a sickness, on the country fell,
Quite apt the motherland to put to shame
If native pride with that could altered be.
Again, a trifling fault needs ridicule,
But merits not the back of our ferule;
The wailing crowd that in the future seek,
And cry " My sister, say you naught this week? "
There is an ill that touches all the crimes,
The wretched maxims of ambitious times,
Which are not even ancient verities,
Which now they give us for fresh novelties,
Old things cast off by Rousseau and Voltaire,
Carmagnole jacket stolen from Robespierre,
A charming wardrobe, tattered wrapping-clouts
Of sovereign people's draggled courtier routs.

And now comes one, the least of all to praise,
The fever of the fools who prowl for days
To tear the plow from every plowman's hand,
Deprave poor working men throughout the land,
In name of God ordaining to give alms,
Drag out the wretch, despite his conscience qualms,
The bloody, rusted sword put in his fist,
Push on the assassin, disappear in mist.
What would he say to this, that swaggering boy,
That idler catching verse, as birds decoy?
If he had scanned the gulf so dark and dim,
What aspect strange would it have had to him?
What gloomy sadness, or Homeric mirth,
In melancholy heart had found its birth?
Would he, contented, us in pity take,
His life, consoled with truer friendship, make,
And like the buzzing crowd, benumb his ears,
As shepherd sleeps, nor bees a-humming hears?
Or now, his heart aroused to scornings fine,
Would he have amply poured, like generous wine,
His bold hiatus, flood Parnassian pours,
In which Despreaux could mix his icy stores?
If he had spoken his robust loud words,
From head to foot he'd stun our sottish hordes;
If he had come and pounced on such prey,
The shade of Juvenal had laughed alway,
And on that torrent black which leads to naught

Some words would float, he spoke for men well-taught.
Thou old-time frankness, muse of fatherland,
Where's thy strong step, and wild and uncouth hand?
How they would shake our fathers' ancient tombs,
If thy sweet voice could strike their echoing rooms!
How they would fall, glories by begging got,
Our muses soiled with foreign lingo rot,
Before thy power, thy immortality,
Which sprang from beauty and from liberty?
With what a blush and piteous grimace
Our squeamish prudes had heard your cutting phrase!
And honest oath has never made you start,
And, fearless, you ne'er juggled in the mart.

What fools in regiments! ah, what marionettes!
What droves of donkeys, jangling their sonnettes!
What a parade of puppets, woe-perturbed,
Would pass before us, summoned by your word!
And what a sight to see, no leading-strings
Amid the chaos wretched, madness brings,
Run wreathed in smiles, your verses frank and fleet,
Now light, more limping, always in bare feet!

Bright cheer, gay genius who wast ours of yore,
The laugh men laughed, from this to every
shore,
Ancestral wit that was so glad on earth,
Good sense eternal which is French of birth,
Flowers of our country, are ye then no more?
Tires then the eagle in the clouds to soar?
And do his steady glances sometimes part
From sovereign star, from whence the sunbeams
dart?

See, then, the other night what was my thought,
The more my busy brain therewith was wrought,
The less I fancied that old Mathurin
Had shown, in those days, cheer or sad chagrin.
You say, "He never would have crossed our
path,
He whom a sorry dinner put in wrath;
He who was frightened, big, unreasoning child,
At faithless flames, or any treachery wild!
He who would bridle serpents in the grass,
At any blunder old Malherbe might pass,
Was so oblivious of humane regard
In giving Borthelot a drubbing hard!"
My dear, this man—and for the reason, too,
That his full, bursting heart to extremes flew,
And that with all that came his mind to strike,
Dislike he knew, and knew as well to like—
Would find our age unworthy of satire,
Too vain to weep at it, too sad to smile;

Whate'er his dream, it would his thoughts beguile.
'Tis but too easy, when at things you glance,
To understand why all's diseased in France.
The thinker suffers from indifference;
With men of heart, the mischief, scanty sense.
But now we preach the truth, to what good end,
And fluent words to cits and boobies send,
And say in verse what all the world doth say?
About our state who is deceived to-day?
As Figaro doth say, "Who's cheated here?"
To express one's thoughts, is that a thing so dear?
The swallow flies—some cad has wounded her;
She falls, she gasps and dies; some passer, sir,
Observes her rigid foot all stained with blood.
The written thought, flown swallow from the brood!
God knows the path by which she's flown away,
Or, when she leaves the nest, what hand may slay!
No, I'm convinced Mathurin would say naught.
Not that from speaking he was dreading aught;
His head went fast, and faster heart, I ween,
The journalist would not have welcome been.
He would not fear, his favor wrongly lost,
Would with his cardinal an abbey cost.
Court compliments and the canonicates,
If not for money gained, he slightly rates.
Still less he feared that people will inquire,
'And you, what right have you to write satire?

What right have you to speak, you lazy dog,
Going to see Margot, and fresh from grog?
He might have answered, "Be not trouble-
bound;
More than your sense is my unreason sound;
I stagger with the juice from that wine-vault;
Fairer my heart, and brains more free from fault,
Than your fine songs in Jeremiah's tone.
In face of all, he loved his dear alone;
Whoever hailed him, had for all reward
A deal of silence and cool disregard.
You, sir, who see men live, and who know how
Whose skill has been to lift an honest brow,
To you these verses go, at random sketched,
Which were less worth had they been nicely
etched.
My silence always brings from you reproach;
In truth, I tire the cadenced line to broach;
I read those verses of the lazy man
Who took three steps, such as a giant can.
To send them to you was my fantasy,
That you may know in what way poesy
Has lived in every time, and lazy men,
The gods' own sons, beloved have sometimes
been.
And now, my dear, my hope and anxious care
(To end almost in verses of Molière)
Is that you're rid of all the care you take,
And not across my nose, my lyre break.

DECEMBER, 1841.

THE GERMAN RHINE

REPLY TO THE SONG OF BECKER

We once possessed your German Rhine;
We've often had it in our glass.
Say, poet, does thy measured whine
Blot out the trace, on plain or pass,
Our chargers' hoofs have marked in German blood the grass?

We once possessed your German Rhine.
An open wound it e'er has been
Since Condé, conquering Palatine,
Asunder tore its dress of green.
Where once the father passed, the son may yet be seen.

We once possessed your German Rhine,
When Teuton courage was afraid,
When Bonaparte, as one divine,
Covered your meadows with his shade.
O'er every German field was waved the Frenchman's blade.

We once possessed your German Rhine.
If you forget your history,

Your maidens poured the thin, white wine,
For Frenchmen with due courtesy.
And of the gallant French they've best kept memory.

If it be yours, your German Rhine,
Go wash in it your livery;
Your words should be much less malign,
For on your day of misery
Your ravens were the sport of eagle's butchery.

Let flow in peace your German Rhine;
Let churches with their double prongs
Gaze at their own reflections fine.
But fear ye, lest your drunken songs
Should wake again the dead, who might avenge their wrongs.

June, 1841.

TO MADAME O.

WHO HAD MADE SOME DRAWINGS FOR THE NOVELS OF THE AUTHOR

As those who pluck wee flowers as they pass,
Nor crushing them beneath their careless feet,
Because those flowers make their thoughts more sweet
As they behold them in the bended grass,
Blessing the hand that plucks the leaves, alas!
God bids us make our lives the more complete,
Cherish the little ones we chance to meet,
So that each bud may bloom a happy lass.

My dark-haired Margot, Balzac fancies not,
Is here, with beating heart, her peach to bite;
And Beatrix, with her warm, rosy arms,
Two blossoms that shall find a happy lot
In my bouquet: their sparkling eyes be bright,
Starring my book, shut from the world's alarms.

LETTER TO LAMARTINE

When the great Byron was about to leave
Ravenna's shores, and thence would seek reprieve
From ennui and unrest in other climes,
Having in mind toward Greece he'd go betimes,
Thus sitting at the feet of mistress pale,
His Guiccioli, waiting favoring gale,
She had a book about her lord of song,
And read your praise that bore his fame along.

You must have kept the memory of that time,
Those lines to Byron in his splendid prime;
You were their author, who wrote void of fear,
Lamartine, who became our glory dear,
'Twas your first essay on your tender lyre,
All sad and beautiful, yet full of fire.
Your heaven-born Muse inspires you nobly now,
While thought's enthroned upon your dreamy brow.

A virgin yet, you love the laurel's bloom;
You knew not, noble son of France, his doom;
You knew not, save by sight of suffering proud,
That man sublime you parted from the crowd.
What eagle, Ganymede, taught that sweet hymn?

Did you foresee that some day you could reach
Such dazzling heights that he might hear you preach?
No; you were twenty, and your heart, it bled;
You read the Corsair, and the man Manfred,
And while you wrote amid your flowing tears,
The breath of Byron gave you larger years.
Torn by his sorrows, with your singing dole,
You hailed, afar, that desolate, proud soul.
Great as he seemed, you felt him friendly, too;
More than a brother, he was kin with you,
And, like the torrent in the valley deep,
His genius in your soul would ever weep.

He to whom Europe gave so often praise,
Trembling, he heard the concert's wild amaze;
He who for ten years fled his own renown,
And of his solitude had made a crown,
Of Melancholy the inspired son,
Finally he became the martyred one;
He, the last lover of poor Italy,
To his last exile was prepared to flee,
Sated with human grandeur, void of fear,
Sang his own death-song, knowing death was near.
He longed to aid some nation to be free;
He longed to die defending liberty;
He listened to your words of praise and truth,
That distant greeting from an unknown youth.

The wealth of style he might not understand,
But all of soul in every line he scanned,
And in his eyes he let his sadness smile;
The homage of the heart is never guile.
How came you to address and pity him?

Poet, now that thy faithful Muse and pure,
Of immortality by chaste love sure,
When bloom of vervain has once crowned thy head,
In turn, like Byron, be thou comforted.
I do not hope to ever be thy peer;
What Heaven has giv'n thee, no one brings me near.
Comparing fates, however great distance,
God will encompass it, and not blind chance.
I send thee homage, O soul greatly praised,
And ask no answer from a soul more raised.
For such exchanges, to be valued, must
Be signed by names which are not writ in dust.
Your name on glory's standard is unfurled;
Mine, I fear, counts but little in the world.
I've often thought I'm weary of my life,
And fain would end what seems a restless strife.
My shadow passed before me in dim light,
Which, full of vanity, I thought deep night.
Poet, I write to tell thee that I love;
A ray of sunshine smote me from above,
And in one day of mourning, when joy slept,
The tears that made me think of thee, I wept.

Which of us, Lamartine, knows not by heart
That song adored by lovers whose souls smart?
'Twas by a lake, one evening, thou didst sigh;
Who has not read a thousand times again
Those lines wherein thy mistress speaks betimes?
Who has not sobbed over those griefs divine,
Deep as the sky and pure as the sunshine?
Alas! those long regrets of love's deceit,
Those ruins everywhere which one may meet,
Those flashes infinite of fleeting light,
What man is he that does not know their sight?
Whoever has loved once, he bears a scar
Deep in the heart, ready for open war,
And each one keeps the secret, sweet torment;
More smitten he, the less will he repent.
Shall I disclose, singer of suffering souls,
Thy glorious pain that my poor heart controls?
That, like thee, for an instant I possessed
Both life and hope in arms lightly compressed,
And that, like thine, my dream has swiftly flown
To realms remote, to skies fore'er unknown?
Shall I tell thee, one evening in the breeze,
Lulled, like thyself, in happiness and ease,
I heard the accents of a voice beloved,
I thought that time itself would not be moved?
Listen: one evening, being alone on earth,
My brain, like thine, gave dreadful memory birth;
Gods! what a youth may suffer, and not die!
I was amazed at my own agony.

That which I felt in fierce and long distress,
Shall I lament it, and its power express?
But how describe a pain unspeakable?
In view of thy recitals, 'tis impossible.
Yes, of that fatal day of horror wild
I wish to give to thee a tale compiled;
The story not of songs or tears shall be;
I'll only tell thee what God has told me.
Here is a picture: When a plowman sees
The lightning in the air, the wind in trees,
He thinks at first the vision is a dream;
The sky grows dark; by lightning's angry gleam
He makes his way across the accustomed moor,
Where wife awaits him at half-open door;
He sees some ashes 'mid a desert, where,
He surely thought his home was standing there;
His ragged children come from out the heath,
And tell him their poor mother lies beneath
The pile of thatch, who died with awful cries.
Now all is silent to his woful eyes;
The unhappy man sees ruin all around;
What was his home, he but dull embers found;
He clasps his children in such dreadful state,
And holds them to his heart all desolate.
If he should sink, naught comes of bitter sorrow,
But hunger comes to-night, and death to-morrow.
No sob comes forth from his oppresséd frame;
Silent, unsteady, without strength or blame,
He sits apart; he sees his desperate plight,
His home, his harvest, disappear from sight.

In the black whirl of smoke and fire's treason,
His misery has carried off his reason.

Thus, when abandoned by a faithless love,
For the first time that I could sorrow prove,
Suddenly pierced by cruel arrow keen,
In solitary grief I might be seen;
Not on the edge of lake with waters clear,
Nor on sweet grass moist with the dewy tears;
My eyes, when drowned in tears, made vacant stare;
My stifled sobs awoke no echoes there.
I stood upon a dark and winding street
Of Paris city, where all evils meet.
Around me shouted that unfeeling crowd
Which never hears th' unfortunate cry aloud.
On the dark pavement the dim lanterns cast
A dubious light, than night was more aghast;
Those lights I followed in the bleak night air;
Something like joy resounded everywhere.
It was in February, at the carnival;
The drunken masks that met upon the street
With vulgar insults did each other greet.
Sometimes in open coach a heaped-up crowd
Appeared at intervals, 'neath rainy cloud.
Then, lost in self within the city, crazed,
Howling foul chants, while resinous torches blazed,
Old men, children, and foul women, too,
Filled with the dregs of drink, a motley crew;

While the priestesses infamous of night,
Parade their anxious specters in dim light.
Thus, like a picture of antique debauch
In ancient Rome, when mobs in darkness watch
An impure Venus rush from secret lair
Disheveled, torch in hand, a specter rare,
Naked and howling with her neophytes,
Whose Bacchic frenzy rends the sleepless nights.
Just God! to weep alone on such a night!
Love of my soul, who left my aching sight,
How could you leave me, who at eve had sworn
You were my life, and you would die ere morn
To prove your love for me? Oh, cruel friend,
Consider that where shame and darkness wend,
I stood a-gazing at the flickering light
Of thy dear lamp, which was my star that night.
I saw no shadow on the window-pane;
My hand it did not part the curtains twain;
Thou didst not care if sky were dark as ink,
Nor try to seek me in that city's sink.

Lamartine, think of me in sorrow there
On a stone seated, in the city square;
Both hands on heart, on that accurséd ground,
Where love bled freely from a deadly wound.
'Twas there, in night of horror and distress,
Where maddened people made insane caress,
Who, as they passed, seemed yelling at my youth:
" Oh, weeping fool, be gay, or else, in truth,

We'll help to drive a dagger in thy breast!"
'Tis there, believe it, poet great confessed,
That I remember thy divinest song.
Oh, lover of Elvire, whose love is strong,
You understand one saying fond adieu;
You understand when hand writes, "I'll be true,"
And the heart signs it, and the lips are given,
The lips whose kiss unites us before heaven;
You understand the deep, unknown resolve
On which our inmost souls each day revolve;
The love that tears aside rebellious will,
And to another heart attaches still,
A powerful tie whose tissue, warp, and woof,
Firm as the solid rock, and diamond-proof;
Which has no fear of time, nor sword, nor flame,
Nor death itself, that which makes lovers game;
They fear no calumny, bear blows of stones,
And in the tomb will love each other's bones.
You understand, ten years such tie was spun,
And of two beings it made only one;
Then, broken suddenly and lost in space,
And we who love, feel terror and disgrace.

O poet, it is heard that human hearts
Are bought and sold like cattle in the marts,
Which move with ardor toward a fixed end,
Must yet beneath a cross of iron bend,
And that on earth one must die more than once.
To change one's misery is vilest chance;

To live upon the grave of our dead love,
Ye gods, why take us not at once above?
To spend our time in yearnings fond yet vain,
To be the first of fickle souls inane,
Weary of hoping is a common mood,
Despair, that crucifies on some new rood,
Are not these deaths, these agonies of heart,
That rend with pain or solitude, whose smart
Is that it feeds upon itself alone,
While passion can transform the heart to stone.
How is it that, without once tumbling o'er,
On his own ruins man treads evermore?
Ah, yes, he does tread o'er them; Fate decrees
Dying a thousand deaths by slow degrees.
Desire and fear, anger and weariness,
All come and disappear, all is distress;
His wretched heart is so constructed, still
Some ruin must forever there distil.
Death is his goal, which he does not ignore;
Toward death advancing, he dies more and more.
He dies in friends, in son and father, too;
He dies in what he weeps for, this is true,
Without account of bodies to be buried.
What is forgetting, but a dying hurried?
'Tis more than dying, to survive one's grief;
When what we love we lose, the soul, in brief,
Flies back to heaven, leaving living corpse;
Nothing it is—than nothing, what is worse?

Well, good or bad, inflexible or frail,
Humble or haughty, sad or gay, we sail
Forever moaning o'er life's troubled sea.
This being made of clay, oh, such is he,
Thou seest him, Lamartine; his blood thy blood,
His happiness is thine, thus understood,
Of all the ills on earth we must endure,
Not one but touches thee, pure or impure;
Thou knowest how to sing, O poet, weep;
Tell me, in sadness how your soul you keep?
What has misfortune whispered in thine ear?
What is thy balm to soothe the bitter tear?
Received by friends, and by thy mistress too,
Of heaven, and self, hast thou had doubts anew?

No, never, dear Alphonse. Sad experience
Brings us ashes, leaves the fire's offense.
Thou hast respect for Providence; His rod
Falls hard, but thou believest in thy God.
Whate'er He be, He's mine; but not two creeds;
His name I know not, but I've seen His deeds;
I know the heavens are His, the hoary blue,
But He and heaven are not owned by two.
I've known great suffering, though being
young;
I've seen the forest green, and love I've sung;
I know what hopes poor souls in sorrow keep,
How one must sow before that he may reap.
But what I've felt, and what I wish to write,
It is what the sorrowing angels would indite.

I know it better yet, can better tell,
For on my heart a sword has cut it well.

Creature of but one day, who aileth for one hour,
What dost thou complain of, and what makes thee to groan?
Thy soul disturbs thee, yet it weeps for loss of power;
Thy soul immortal is, thy heart will cease to moan.

Thou feel'st thy heart snared with woman's artful wiles;
Thou sayest that it breaks, and suffers long and sore;
Thou hast besought thy God to ease thy soul the whiles—
Thy soul immortal is, the heart will heal once more.

A few but vain regrets are troubles in thine eyes;
Thou sayest that the past conceals the future day;
Talk not of yesterday, but let the dawn arise—
Thy soul immortal is, and time will pass away.

Thy body bears indeed the scourging of thy thought;
Thou feelest thy head droop upon thy knees aghast.

Fall, get upon thy knees, O creature still untaught—
Thy soul immortal is, and death will come at last.

Thy bones within the tomb will crumble into dust;
Thy memory, thy name, thy glory sinks with thee,
But not thy love, if that it soars above thy lust—
Thy soul immortal is, and love has memory.

February, 1836.

TO LYDIA

IMITATION

Horace. When once you loved me, Lydia,
When ne'er another arm but mine,
Was thrown about your neck, dear,
No king was happier than thine.

Lydia. When once I was your own beloved,
And better loved than sweet Chloë,
Close by your side, as hand begloved,
My joy no heavenly queen could know.

Horace. Chloë rules over me to-day,
Skilled in the lute, well versed in song;
If she one moment is away,
That moment is a cycle long.

Lydia. My youthful flame, my sweet Calais,
Has, Horace, taken your own place,
I'd die to have such lover gay,
Nor would I ask to see your face.

Horace. And yet, if there came back to you
The love that once enchainèd so,
And I returned, proved to be true,
Would you not bid another go?

Lydia. Calais is faithful, that's the thing!
And you, my poet, what are you?
More than a varying song you'll sing,
As bright and lasting as the dew;
And yet, I say it now, and sigh,
For my sweet poet I would die.

1837.

SOUVENIR OF THE ALPS

By ennui crushed, and weary, footsore, worn,
Plodded the traveler o'er the parchéd plain,
The golden clouds of dust beyond him borne,
With ne'er a sign of rain.

'Neath an old bridge in a secluded nook,
Hard by the tavern's much-beweathered door,
A silvered crystal wave of water shook
In ceaseless, constant pour.

Two birds, in an Italian pine-tree, sang,
Fluttering about, their pretty songs of love;
Quite cheerfully one of their warblings rang,
Sad did the other prove;

The while a restive mule stamped on the earth,
And 'neath the vine where laughs the chubby god.
Unconscious of the bloom, and without mirth,
The bridge the traveler plod.

Full of a bitter and sweet mystery,
In silence tarried he, and heavy-browed;
The sun dried up his tears, yet sadder he
Did ever seem and cowed.

Oh, fickle fortune blind,
Tormentor of glad love,
Be good to me and kind,
Take from me troublous memory,
And those strange eyes I ever see!

Why did I see them shine
So in their beauty rare?
Why looked they into mine?
To love them still I am not let;
Oh, would I could their light forget!

As after sorrow, trouble, wind, and storm,
Imploring, up to Heaven still looks man,
The traveler lifts his head in noble form
The mighty Alps to scan.

Before him there the summit of Mount Rose
Lifted its snow-capped head against the skies;
If any place on earth Diana knows,
'Tis there her footstep lies.

Something concerning it deer-hunters know,
When, danger-set, up through the gorges they
With weapons drawn make new paths where they go
In the dawn of the day.

Meanwhile the sun, peaceful and at his ease,
Burns, without gilding, the Milanese city,
And in that horizon, a world to please,
And fade, alas! the pity,

The mountain looms; the chasm's at thy feet,
The avalanche above—be not afraid:
The mule might stumble—he cannot retreat;
Fate on him is laid.

A winding ravine leads a dangerous way
Unto the mountain—sort of a lost road;
Then he looked back; the plain and campagna,
All vanished, nowhere showed.

The specter of the glacier, purple-clad,
Behind him had arisen like a cloud;
The songs and tears, and Italy, the glad,
Were gone as in a shroud.

A strange black eagle, soaring o'er the green,
Care-laden and a-looking from afar,
Did seem to ask, "Who is this creature seen?
This new world would he mar?"

Lord Byron, once in his proud sadness, said,
When going through this brooding country dim,
He could but think of his old friends as dead,
Such were the pines to him.

Yet are they fine, those thunder-riven pines;
In this unbounded desert, Byron here
With their dead branches 'neath his feet opines
Their solemn meaning clear.

Perchance they knew as much, and more, than we,
Those old, dumb things linked with the mystic soil,
Which on our Common Mother's breast we see
In sleep that none may spoil.

1851.

MALIBRAN

STANZAS

I

It is too late—of her has all been said;
She is no more, and fifteen days are fled;
And in our land a fortnight, I am told,
A recent death but makes an item old.
Whatever means, besides, regret translate,
It soon in every land us men doth sate.

II

O Maria! The painter and the poet high
Leave heirs immortal when at last they die;
Never does frightful night take them entire;
They can not act; but their great souls aspire
Of death, of time, the conquest seek to try,
And in the fight both bard and painter die.

III

The one on bronze his thought to grave has sought,
To golden rhythm the other cadence brought;
At first we listen, then become his friend;
To canvas dying Raphael thought would lend;
And, too, that nothingness might come not near,
Enough the child asleep on mother dear.

IV

As in the lamp the faithful flame may shine,
The empty Parthenon, the marble shrine,
Phidias, eternal memory, guards and sees;
Young Venus, daughter of Praxiteles,
Still smiles in her divinity alone,
On feebler ages by her beauty won.

V

From age to age, receiving life anon,
So more toward God the glories all foregone;
So the wide echo of the genius' voice
Is voice of universal human choice.
Of thee, poor Marie, yesterday bereft,
To us a chapel and a cross is left!

VI

A cross, oblivion, silence in the night!
Oh, listen! 'Tis the wind—'tis ocean's night.
A fisher sings upon the grand highway,
Of all that beauty, glory, hope's bright day;
Of sweetest strains of instrument divine,
No feeble sighs, no far-off echoes pine.

VII

A cross! and thy name carved upon a stone,
A husband's name, not even name thy own.
And this is all on earth that thou may'st leave,
And they who go at thy last home to grieve,

Find not that name by all mankind caressed,
And, praying, see no place where knee may rest.

VIII

Ninette, where are they, beauteous muse above,
Those accents full of charm, of dread and love,
Which fluttered with the lip's inspiring power
Like light perfume from out the hawthorn flower?
Where vibrates now the voice's wailing sound,
That living harp to all thy heart-strings bound?

IX

Was it not yesterday, with maddening thrill
Thy mocking rapture quickened fair Corille,
And with Rosina flung at us again
The amorous roulade, sweet leer of Spain?
Those tears upon thy arm when Willow rang,
'Twas yesterday, and Desdemona sang.

X

But yesterday in life's bright flower and fire,
Thou went'st o'er Europe, in thy hand a lyre,
As thou didst swim in seas with laughing cry,
And sing the tarantella 'neath Naples' sky,
Thou angel lion-heart, bird without rest,
At eve a child, the morrow artist blest!

XI

But yesterday elate with happy joy,
Thy charm could the enraptured crowds decoy,

And London, Madrid, France, Italia old,
Brought to thy feet what we men covet—
gold;
The gold twice-sacred, need of thy sweet song,
So often charity's, but thine not long.

XII

What hadst thou done to die, O noble heart,
Image of God, who didst while here impart
To rich men some delight, bread to the poor?
Ah, tell, who strikes so in mother nature,
And what blind reaper and his famished hand
Upon the best of us dare to lay their hand?

XIII

Is't not enough for that dark angel wan
To leave us in our day not one great man?
That Géricault, Cuvier, Goethe, Byron,
Sank yesterday beneath the funeral stone;
That we have seen so many dead, well known,
In the abyss succeed Napoleon?

XIV

Is it our fate our dearest ones to lose,
And weeping come, and eyelids for them close,
As soon as hope has sparkled in their eyes?
Of their elect, so jealous are the skies?
Or shall we say the word of ancient seer,
That he who dieth young to God is dear?

XV

How many full of life to death have sprung!
Beneath the ancient cypress, willows young,
The ashes of Robert are hardly cold,
Bellini falls and dies. Slow torture hold
And drag Carrel, bleeding, to his last rest;
The portal of our age with tombs is dressed.

XVI

What shall remain to us but funeral pall!
To-day we build, to-morrow bury all;
We, who can feel the soil already shake,
And o'er the dust onward our passage make;
And if beneath our feet winds sweep the sand,
What mourning wear we at the Lord's command?

XVII

Alas! Maria, thou wast with us still;
When birds on furrows sing Aurora's will,
The plowman stops and wipes his sweaty brow,
Breathes in the air a breath of pleasure now;
Thy voice consoled us; fresh, sonorous strain,
Thy songs to Heaven bore our heavy pain.

XVIII

What we must weep on thy untimely grave,
Is not the art divine the secret wisdom gave;
Some one may read the art thou couldst create;
It is thy soul, Ninette, so simply great;

Heart's voice alone can every heart obtain,
And none shall give it back to us again.

XIX

Thou mightest live without the undaunted soul;
This was thy only ill, the burden whole,
'Neath which thy frame was bending like a reed:
It bore the strife inexorable indeed.
The Muse implacable, all-powerful God,
With arms of fire laid thee beneath the sod.

XX

Thou couldst not stifle that enduring flame
Which throbbing breast of thine could never tame.
Thou might'st be living, hear the plaudits loud
Of hardened public, cool, indifferent crowd,
Which lavishes to-day a fickle boon
On folks of whom not one shall die so soon.

XXI

Knewest thou, so ill, human ingratitude?
What dream was thine to die for things so rude?
What clustering flowers could render thee so vain,
And make thee shed true tears upon our Seine,
When actors, artists of most famous guise,
Though crowned a thousand times, have yet dry eyes?

XXII

Why turned I not my head to smile again,
As we do here when we emotion feign?
Alas! such love as men had never seen.
When singing Willow in that wild, glad mien;
'Twere better hold the lyre in graceful state.
Pasta does so: couldst not her imitate?

XXIII

Didst thou not know, my sweet comedienne,
That all those cries that touched the hearts of men
Increased thy pallor and thy cheeks made thin?
And that upon thy temple's burning skin
From day to day thou laid'st a trembling hand,
That, choosing pain, can we our God withstand?

XXIV

And then didst thou not feel that thy fair youth
From thy tired eyes was flowing, tears of ruth,
And from thy noble heart exhaled in sobs?
And hearing thou thy loved ones' saddened throbs,
Didst thou not feel some fatal, frenzied strife,
Would wear thee out, and still thy wandering life?

XXV

Yes, yes, thou knowest, after triumph sweet,
Some night they'd lay thee in a winding sheet!

They brought thee, like to alabaster cold;
The surgeon would the bluish veinlet hold,
And watch the blood in drops so dark to see;
And well thou knewest what was touching thee.

XXVI

Thou knew'st that in this weary, transient hour,
Naught's good but love, naught true but suffering's power.
Each night amid thy songs thou feltest pale;
The world thou knewest, and foul envy's bale;
Gathering thy genius in a broken frame,
Thou sawest, Malibran, thy dying flame.

XXVII

Die, then! Thy death is sweet, thy task fulfil;
Now, what we men on earth call genius still,
Is need of loving—all beyond is vain,
Since human love is quickly lost again.
It is a great soul's happy destiny
For some high love divine like thee to die.

October, 1836.

LE MIE PRIGIONI

"Sad as the door of a prison,"
It has been said;
And I believe that it is true,
From freedom led.

And when behind the locked-up bars
This line from me,
'Tis better far you go on guard,
Decidedly.

For one whole week now I have been
In durance vile,
And the cold treatment that is mine
Makes my blood rile.

I stand about the window, I,
And the thin smoke
From my old pipe beclouds the morn—
Bright the day broke.

Indeed, the outlook is quite fine
At early dawn,
When one sees people wash, and put
Their raiment on.

And for diversion should one yawn,
He may behold

A lengthy wall and a long roof,
Beaten and old.

Ah, those to whom this quiet place
Is all unknown,
Could never guess what one tile means
On bare walls shown.

Never could I, alas! have dreamed,
Had I seen not
The splendor of a chance beam
On a bare spot.

Yet autumn throws its yellow rays,
Beyond belief,
On yonder roof so flat and dull,
A golden sheaf.

This dungeon yet is not so sad,
Adorned by wit,
For poet, artist, and mad-cap
Have been in it!

The walls are covered here and there
With quaint designs—
Strange mile-posts of the weary hearts
And tired minds.

Here each one found a reverie
Under his bonnet;

Jim pencils here the Virgin dear;
There, Jack, a sonnet.

Here, the barefooted Magdalen
Reading a book;
There, Venus laughing 'neath a sheet
In a cool nook.

Yet farther on 'tis Faith and Hope,
And Charity:
Needing the latter; their works show
Them each to be.

An Andalusian, rather gay,
With neck so fair,
Is gazing from her place at you,
With scolding air.

And he who made it, seems to me
(This dim medallion),
Possessed a very clever stroke
With his crayon.

The Christ beholdeth Louis Philippe
With some surprise;
And yon old fellow smokes his pipe,
A-looking wise.

Close after that a landscape comes,
'Tis hardly good,

Wherein 'tis seen an honest man
Works for his food.

And shall I say what odalisks
With dev'lish feeling
The painters made to their great risk
E'en to the ceiling?

All of these characters defaced,
However, speak;
Some moments all these thoughts have lived,
Brazen or meek.

How many captives, for an hour
In transient shame
In this poor dwelling-place immured,
Have cut their names!

Ah, this old bed whereon I rhyme
These last verses—
This bolster hard whereon I yawn
In grim curses—

Here many others placed their heads,
In misery lay;
Brave hearts encased in bodies weak
Have pined away.

What's this? A-dreaming vaguely here
Against the bars,

The while the mist within mine eyes
Dims the bright stars!

And what can signify these tears,
The heart's warm showers?
They do not clear the mind's dull skies,
Whose storm-cloud lowers.

And do I love my mistress? Nay,
This I protest:
Her widowhood concerns her more
Than my unrest.

Or shall I write a drama now,
Perfect in letter?
Ay, song for song, a woman still
Is ever better.

Is it that I can not but feel,
And yet for me
I must but love that fair unknown—
Sweet Liberty?

When this great phantom is, they say,
Safe under key,
It looks like a two-volume book
But half to be.

Is it that I've incurred some debt?
But never fear:

I'm safely lodged; none can arrest
Who dwells in here!

'Tis falling yet, alas! that tear,
And it lingers,
Caught, like dew-drops upon the rose,
On my fingers.

"Ay, it is right," it means to say;
Poor little one,
Unknown my heart is breathing thee
A blessing on!

And that the blood which gives it life
Is all thy wealth,
And that all else is for the rhyme,
And naught for health.

But no one is so desolate,
Even in thought;
These drops of blood were for thy joy,
Believe me, wrought.

When thou tauntest with thy mystery,
With mocking air,
Thy friends, or brother, or mother,
Are in thy care.

That pale and sickly spark, alas!
Which lives in thee,

Goes forth and gains by its own law,
The life to be.

It is the bond of all of us,
And once 'tis shed,
It holds the living in one flood,
And all the dead!

SEPTEMBER 20, 1843.

TO MARIE

SONNET

As when the budding flower of springtime feels
Young April's gentle, wooing, first caress,
And hears the soft and whispering breeze to press
Its timid tale of love, while northward steals
The South, and every hidden dreamer reels
Upward fresh drunken at the heart, to bless
The golden sunshine in the wilderness,
And sweeten all the painted woods and fields;

So have I seen Marie in the spring
Of love just opening her rosy lips,
Her blue eyes like the skies she looked upon,
A-tremble as the nightingales that sing,
And dizzy as the swallow when he dips
First his young wing—her fluttering heart half gone.

TO M. ALFRED TATTET

SONNET

And so, dear friend, you are about to go!
Farewell! let fools condemn your foolishness.
Where'er you go a-blessing and to bless,
This knowledge never let your mind forego,
Or whether fortune's wave be high or low,
Which by our sacred friendship we confess—
The best guide is a trusted friend: and, yes,
The streams of memory that ever flow.

From time to time, when by your mistress' side,
Remember me, and those good times were ours,
Whose noble joys were never priced in gold;
When rolled the river in a rising tide,
Engoldened by sweet friendship's sunny hours,
Whose passing by a saddened clock was told.

TO ALFRED TATTET

SONNET

'Twas summertime, and cool and fresh the night,
And by our lamps, the stars, we sat, dear friend,
Nor code to break nor any creed to mend,
When you observed, our conversation light,
" How sweet to be on earth and mark the flight
O' time! " We sat quite in the friendly bend
Of your loved woods, where in fond riot blend
Contending sweetnesses blown to delight.

Ah, life is sweet, and joy a drunkenness!
'Tis sweet to drink of it without a fear,
And celebrate the very gods of youth,
With flowers to crown one's mistress, and to bless
The name of Friendship with a smile or tear,
To toast in Folly's glass the god of Truth.

TO LYDIA

TRANSLATED FROM HORACE, ODE IX, BOOK III

HORACE.

When thee for sweetheart I possessed,
When no young stripling more robust than I
Thy rounded shoulder would keep company,
Close by my side, I thee caressed,
No king was happier in those days gone by .

LYDIA.

When I for thee thy dearest was,
When Chloë became pale, were Lydia nigh,
Lydia, whose fame all Italy would cry,
Lived happier and more blessed, because
More than a god's embrace was thine to me.

HORACE.

Chloë my mistress is to-day;
Chloë, who knows the lute, whose soul is fire;
The sweet sound of her voice excites desire;
And I would to the shades away,
If for her life the gods would mine require.

LYDIA.

Myself, at present, I consume
With love for Calais, who is sweet;
Naught can it quench, and at his feet
I'd die, nor wish for life's resume,
Did gods demand such sacrifice complete.

HORACE.

And yet, if in our secret thought
The old love were alight again;
If, Chloë were by me unsought,
My door ajar. If Venus rage amain,
To yoke of bronze should we be brought?

LYDIA.

Calais's treasure of bright gold
A sun whose splendor can't be told,
And thou more light than breeze unrolled,
And wild as storms on Adriatic wave;
But, after all, beside thee, as thy slave,
I willingly would live, or die thy life to save.

1837.

NEVER

"NEVER," you said to me, as over us two there
The plaintive melody of Schubert filled the air;
"Never," you said to me, the while, in spite of you,
Shone out from your great eyes the melancholy blue.

"Never," you said again, pale, and with air so sweet
One might believe he saw an ancient coin greet;
But of concealéd treasures instinct, proud, and hale,
With blushes covered you as with a jealous veil.

. . . . . .

What word in this you say, Marquise, and what an ill!
Alas! I could not see your face—mine eyes would fill—
Or that sweet smile divine that would or live or kill.

Than lovely is your soul, less sweet are your blue eyes,
And as I gazed in them I saw, as daybreak skies,
A star, your heart shut in the flower that never dies.

1839.

TO MISS ——

Ay, women, say whate'er one may,
The fatal power have
To free us with a single smile,
Or keep us but a slave.

Ay, silence, or a word or two,
Or but a careless glance,
You may thrust through a lover's heart
Blind Cupid's shining lance.

Ah, great be your vanity,
So cowardly are we,
Nothing is equal to your power,
Unless your frailty be.

But everything of power on earth,
If stormed too much, it never clears;
And who can suffer and be mute,
Draws him aloof from you in tears.

Howe'er so great the woe he bears,
His sad rôle is the fairer one:
Still more our torture do I love
Than all the torturing you have done!

January, 1839.

SONNET

TO MADAME N. MENESSIER

I saw you as a child—ay, think of it!
As fresh as any rose, heart in your eyes.
I saw you as a pouting babe of signs;
Lord Byron you adored, his verses, wit.
We talked of babyhood, and how things flit;
How things live on the thing that often dies,
And ever change the heavy-laden skies:
As butterflies on flowers thus our minds lit.

Cowards dread fleeting Time, because he brings
Death in his flight; whereas 'tis Death himself,
The death of things, that brings us memory—
The unseen warbler that forever sings—
To whom we owe so much laid on the shelf,
A baby's toy, or book of poesy.

TO THE SAME LADY

SONNET

A BIRD of passage sometimes sends a cry
Upon the winds along a lonely road,
A rainy day when the prophetic toad
Declares for showers; then from the woods a sigh
Of song comes in a sweet and faint reply
From out the nightingale's dim, green abode,
To lighten the wayfaring heart's lone load
Ere in the leafy woods the strange voice die.

So once you answered me, long years ago,
And happy were we in our findings then—
The hearts we found and traded in for love;
Now you seem sad, and there's a touch of wo
In all you say of women, things, or men:
Who shall bring back the past our joy to prove?

TO THE SAME LADY

SONNET

I HAVE your verses, which are flowers to me,
And I can hear you say, " That boy will feel
Himself obliged to answer my appeal."
In this exchange there is no charity;
No loving heart is driven, nor will be,
On Love's glad errand, though it be to steal,
Or drink until the happy senses reel:
So my reply is but my pleasure's fee.

Ay, we have both together quite begun
To dream that mighty dream wherein the world
Is rocked by careless winds unsteadily,
Pleading that we must lose what we have won,
While o'er our heads the orbs of heaven are whirled;
But for your sake I shall yet patient be.

SONG

When the coquettish maiden, Hope,
  Nudges our elbow, passing by,
Then, in a hurry, in a lope,
  Looks backward with a smiling eye—

Where wanders man? Where calls his heart?
  How like a swallow's man's desire!
Yet keener far its bitter smart,
  And fuel for the hotter fire!

Elusive maiden fair, tell me,
  Dost know the mapping of thy tour?
And can it be old Destiny
  Must have so young a paramour?

TO MY BROTHER

RETURNING FROM ITALY

So, then, my dear, you're home once more,
Home from the land I knew of yore,
That seems a dream;
From those fair sites where Eve's offense
Has in the orange recompense,
With golden gleam.

You've seen it, that enchanted sky,
Revealing to our mortal eye
Mysterious birth.
More pure a sigh to God will rise
Here, than on spot of equal size
Elsewhere on earth.

You've seen them, the old manor halls,
Those palaces and crumbling walls,
Once gay Florence,
Duller than Milan, where at least
Five times a year we see the feast,
Cerrito's dance.

You've seen her, Genoa, the proud,
With marble palaces endowed,
Crowning the wave;

The tinted face, the dazzling eye,
That chatters and plays laughingly
With foliage brave.

That seaport town antique, widespread,
You've seen, where in its language dead
Murmurs the sea;
Where Stendhal, that delightful soul,
Lured, filling his devoted rôle
Delightedly.

That haughty phantom you have seen,
Who one time had the world, I ween,
In heart and eyes:
Cæsar is on his purple bier,
In abbé's cloak, dropping a tear—
His widow dies.

Cradled you've been on sea so pure,
O'er which a sky of clear azure
Naples inlays;
While lazzaroni rest in shade,
With maccaroni hunger-stayed,
For alms it prays.

Though wily, frank, or cynical,
Does it not breathe (illogical)
Unwonted charm?
The race has ne'er been known to change,
And for an orange would exchange
Fame, or a farm.

You praise Palermo and Catane
Your own encomiums I retain;
But they accuse
That you have spoken tenderly,
Less tourist-wise than lovingly,
Of Syracuse.

Fair are they, when the weather's fair,
Mohammedan, and debonair,
Sicilian eyes.
How passionate their tranquil look!
In answering them, what kind of book
Contains replies?

Sweet are they, chiefly when at night
In black domino goes a sprite,
A little bark;
Aboard her one can safely go,
And say, "A stranger, but no foe,
My beauty dark."

Ischia! 'Tis there that eyes are fair;
There is it that an amorous pair
Of breasts are seen;
With a red stocking neatly girt,
Twinkling beneath the golden skirt,
Are slippers seen.

Poor Ischia! In thy every street
Thy maidens in their naked feet
Tread the soft dust.

Whether in rags or colored cloth,
To earn a coin they're nothing loth—
Find crust they must.

'Tis sure, whatever it may be,
That they spoke not in Abruzzi
The Latin tongue;
And no postilion there can claim
Apollo's kinship, nor aught name
The Muses sing.

It is most strange, assuredly,
That old Minturnæ's walls should be
Capua near;
That there two demigods should fall,
One full of ancient wine, one crawl
In mud so drear.

Did brigands halt you on your way
Over the panic-stricken clay
Of Terracine?
Did you descry them in the reeds,
Where the wide-nostriled buffalo feeds,
And sleeps serene?

Alas! Were no old manners left,
And is the age so much bereft
Of poetry!
Those highways grand, both day and night,
Are dull as love without the blight
Of jealousy.

But tell me, did you go to see,
Near to Ravenna by the sea,
At any rate,
That sad and charming haunt so bright,
Where Byron drowned in love's delight
All of his hate?

A post-boy poor and small was he,
Who to Ferrara drove with me,
The horse well geared.
I wish that he had driven you;
He had no fear when night it grew,
Nor brigands feared.

A right good spot is Padua,
Where doctors very great in law
Have marvels made;
Italian soup I love the more
One gets along the Brenta's shore,
'Neath trellis shade.

Likewise you've seen it, doubtless—yes,
Living as yet, whom God may bless,
Despite our fears,
The antique lady of Lido,
Who, swimming in the long ago,
Still swims in tears.

Housetops superb! Cold monuments!
Gold-woven shroud for cerements,
Here Venice lies.

There ever dwells my longing heart,
Restored, a whole, or e'en a part,
God send the prize.

You may have seen it happily
Beneath the pavement, by the way
Of Campanile,
Or in that Doge's palace grand,
Of which so many suns have tanned
The noble pile.

You saw it in a poppied field,
Or on the empurpled grapes that yield
Delightful wine;
Or yet within some lightsome boat
That on the bright canals doth float
In sweet sunshine.

Have you discovered it in shreds,
Where on lone shore are burial beds?—
It should be there.
The tombs there by the sounding sea
Are tombs of noblest part of me,
Left in their care.

Joyful it was, youthful and brave;
It cast itself into the wave
Of adventure;
It breathed the air that bore the cloud,
And sometimes showed itself full proud
Of a deep lure.

'Twas credulous and loyal yet;
It could not think that all the fret
Of ill were crime.
Then suddenly it sunk itself,
E'en as a glacier poised on shelf
Of gulf sublime.

Ah, what of things that moved to tears,
Of places where the storied years
Refuse to die?
Those places where I should have died,
For where dwells Fame with greater pride
Than in dear Italy?

Now home again in deep content
Your journey was on pleasure bent,
Such thirst to slake.
Into your nest you bring again
That hope which always will remain,
New tours to make.

The journey's end makes parting sweet;
About the fire with tired feet,
Recounting all
Your spirit has beheld afar,
The pleasures, dangers, things that mar,
You still recall

Those pleasures, without sorrow's taint,
And the mistakes, without complaint
At accident.

Thankful for every favoring gale,
While at unhappiness you rail
Without resent.

Friend, go no more so far away;
I'll have great need of help some day
For fate unknown.
I know not whither tends my path,
But sweeter 'tis when my hand hath
Grasp of your own.

March, 1844.

SONG

At Saint Blazius, at Zuecca,
You were happy there;
At Saint Blazius, at Zuecca,
All was fair—was fair.

Do you trouble to remember
Those bright days of yore,
And, rememb'ring, have you longing
To return once more

To Saint Blazius, to Zuecca's
Fields, where you and I
Plucked the wintergreen together,
There to live and die?

February, 1834.

ON A FAIR DEPARTED

Beautiful was she, if somber night which falls
Within the solemn close of chapel walls,
Where lie the dead in sleep profound and dull,
Can be called beautiful.

And she was good, if it is God's command
To give, to those who beg, with lib'ral hand—
If without pity, gold is charity—
Then good indeed was she.

Thought had she, if thought is but the noise
Of a well-modulated, gentle voice,
Flowing like river to the far-off sea—
The deepest thought had she.

She prayed—ah, yes, if two fair, lovely eyes,
Turned with devoutness up toward the skies,
Mean that to God she supplication made,
Ah, then she prayed—she prayed.

She smiled—if ever tender floweret,
Whose snowy petals ne'er have opened yet,
Could spread its balm on breezes that caress,
She smiled—ah, yes, she smiled.

Tears had she giv'n, if in her icy heart
The flower of sympathy had dared to start;
Or gracious thought from out her soul had leapt,
Surely she would have wept.

She would have loved, had haughty pride not shed,
As lamp above the coffin of the dead,
It's useless light upon her barren heart:
She had felt Love's sweet smart.

Dead is she, and she never lived—ah, me!
She knew not life, or of life's mystery;
From her dull hands the book has fall'n unread—
'Tis closed, and she is dead!

October, 1842.

REMEMBER THOU

Remember thou, when timid morning light
Opens the mystic portals of the day;
Remember thou, when melancholy night
Beneath her silver veil doth dreaming stray,
When throbs thy heart to pleasure's happy call,
When shades of misty night about thee fall.
Hark! all the woodlands ring
With voice that's murmuring,
Remember!

Remember thou, after chill destiny,
Forevermore has parted you and me;
When grieving exile and the passing years
Have withered hope and dimmed my eyes with tears:
Dream of my hapless love, dream of my last farewell;
Absence nor time can break my love's deep spell.
Long as my heart shall beat,
Ever it will repeat,
Remember!

Remember thou, when 'neath the frozen ground
My broken heart shall rest in sleep profound;

Remember thou, when on my silent tomb
Shall burst the lonely floweret into bloom;
Thou shalt not see me more; but my immortal part
To thee will come again and linger near thy heart.
Hark! while the night-winds blow,
To a voice moaning low,
Remember!

1842.

TO M. VICTOR HUGO

SONNET

To love full many things for us 'tis meet,
So we may know the thing that we love best—
Ambition, fame, activity, and rest,
Life's luxuries and vices—pleasures fleet—
The wild, dense woods, the fields of ripened wheat;
And 'neath our feet sweet blossoms must be prest.
Then the heart knows that it is past its youth,
And causes in effects we quickly see.

But of the things which pass so fleetingly,
The best that's left is an old friend, in truth,
For, though we differ, draw apart, in sooth,
What odds? for when we meet, good friends we'll be,
Recalling dear old times, old work, old play,
And past "to-morrows" turned to yesterday!

April, 1843.

TO SAINTE-BEUVE

ON A PASSAGE IN AN ARTICLE INSERTED IN THE REVUE DES DEUX MONDES

Well have you said, O friend, that in the heart
Is ofttimes a sweet floweret set apart,
Which blooms and grows and perfumes all the mind—
That, in a word, three-quarters of mankind
Entomb within their souls a poet dead in youth.
You've said it well, but more you've spoke than truth.

The language of the gods, my friend, you've caught,
But you have failed in tracing out your thought;
Peruse your lines, I pray you, yet once more—
To your offended muse I give you o'er!
And mind, that oftentimes men's hearts do keep
A poet young, alive—but fall'n asleep!

June, 1837.

IMPROMPTU

IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS POETRY?"

To range all memory and to fix all thought;
To hold it poised in balance on a beam of gold,
Uncertain, tremulous, yet all immovable;
To eternalize one moment's reverie;
To love and seek the true, the beautiful;
To sing, to laugh, to weep, without much cause; perchance,
To make of sigh, of word, of smile, of look,
A work exquisite, full of grace and charm;
To fashion from a tear a lustrous pearl:
These are the fond desires of poet's heart;
These are his wealth, his life, and his ambition's end.

1839.

SADNESS

My strength and my life I have lost,
And vanished my youth's golden dream;
My pride to the winds I have tost,
And lost is my fond self-esteem.

When I was acquainted with truth,
A friend I believed her to be;
When I understood her, forsooth,
Her presence grew irksome to me.

Yet she is eternal, I know,
And they who without her would go,
Know naught of the things here below.

God speaks, I must answer his call:
The sole good that is left, after all,
Are the tears from my eyes I've let fall.

June, 1847.

MY NEIGHBOR'S CURTAIN

IMITATION OF GOETHE

See, my neighbor's snowy curtain
  Lifts a little—she is there!
She is coming, I am certain,
  For a breath of air.

Her white hand the window's raising,
  And my heart beats high;
Would she think it most amazing
  If I played the spy?

Oh, alas! I'm only dreaming;
  My fair neighbor loves a fool,
And her curtain was but streaming
  In the night-wind cool.

ON THE DÉBUTS OF THE MISSES RACHEL AND PAULINE GARCIA

In spite of words, the font that 'neath the feet
Of Pegasus gushed forth, still flows to-day;
It lived for aye, that essence pure and sweet,
And on the world its sparkling waters play.
The gods, believe me, are not yet effete!

What profit do we gain from loud dispute,
From strife forever vain, yet still renewed,
From heated argument, which pays not to refute,
From useless bickerings which raise a feud?
Impotent words; 'twere better we were mute.

Let's prate about the arts, while each one still
His errors on the other thrusts with glee,
As rakes exchange their mistresses at will.
The flow'rs in spring will always blooming be,
And the immortal arts no hand can kill.

At leisure let's compare the modern and antique;
Let's argue on our fads both old and new;
Let's stand our ground; to fight it out let's seek,
And when with argument we're black and blue,
We'll know as much as new-born babes of Greek.

Oh, youthful hearts replete with poetry,
Thrice-welcome guests, whom all the gods adore,
The same in years, the same in genius ye!
Blest be that charity which ye restore
To hearts grown callous with the years that flee!

May Fortune follow you with joy and mirth!
'Twas not by accident that fate did choose
The same propitious hour to give you birth.
Your mother is the fair, attentive Muse
Who guards the sacred fire here on the earth.

The god inspiring you, without a fear obey;
Heed not that we are taking note of you;
Those smiles, those tears that melt our hearts away,
All of your treasures—give them to us, do!
Sing, children, sing, and let us say our say.

1839.

ALL ON A WRETCHED DAY

Since I've adored you, you've put on
Many a dress on many a day
(Perchance each day a different one);
But that, Palmyra, is your way.

And once, along the avenue,
Upon a drizzly afternoon,
I sauntered happily with you,
Your lightsome arm within my own.

Ah, how you chattered! and your eyes
Spoke just a little love, my pet;
And 'tween earth's mud and weeping skies
Your dainty little feet were wet.

Did it but dream, your round leg fair
(Ah, if it did, it never told),
That 'neath the ermine you would wear
Velvet and satin, cloth of gold?

And if my sad heart e'er denies
The joy that moment brought to me,
May all the mud leap to my eyes,
O'er which you trod so jauntily!

April, 1847.

TO THE KING

AFTER THE ATTACK OF MEUNIER

The murderers, great Prince, thy pow'r do consecrate;
The Lord himself this solemn climax planned;
By the elective right thou didst command
And reign: now thou'rt thrice king, proclaimed by Fate —
A right divine the bullet and the steel create.
Of those on whom blind Chance with reckless hand
Hath set a crown, how many do we rate,
Have sworn the sacred oath of state in vain?
Thou by thy people and thy God hold'st sway;
Smile at the regicide and go thy way.
But be thou prudent, Philippe, in thy reign;
Thy spirit is thy country's wealth and stay;
Thy body is her shield, and she, 'tis plain,
In guarding thee doth guard herself from harm:
Watch we together, then, in strength and calm.

December, 1836.

GOOD-BY

Good-by! I think that in this life
I'll see thee nevermore;
God calls thee to this world of strife;
I loved—my heart is sore.

No weeping, no lamenting vain,
The future holds now thee;
I would not tear the veil in twain
Shall hide thee far from me.

Thou dost depart all hopefulness,
With pride thou wilt return;
Thine absence will cause loneliness,
And yearning hearts to burn.

Good-by! Ambition leads you on
To drink of pleasures deep
And dangerous; the rosy dawn
Lights up the mountain steep.

Some day, perchance, will come to thee
A worth of heart and hand;
The good you'll find thrice good to be,
And you will understand.

1839.

SONNET TO THE READER

Reader, once following an antique rule,
"Good morning" scribbled I on the first page;
But we are living in another age,
An age wherein the wise man needs be fool;
Old interests by fresh breezes are cool,
And who plays not with Folly is no sage;
Things new and fickle now are all the rage;
The youngest upstart would confound the school.

And politics? That is our misery,
And my best enemies give me advice—
Be one thing now, another then, never!
The moment's praises they are naught to me—
Too quick the sale, alas, too great the price:
Ninette or Ninon, be mine forever!

January, 1850.

THE LAMENT OF MINUCCIO

Go, Love, and tell my lord of my great pain,
That I must die of it; that had he come
In pity to my aid, then I would fain
Die happy, with pale lips all sweetly dumb.

Upon my knees, O Love, I beg thee go,
Take him the message of my constant woe;
Tell him how I do ever pray and weep,
A-dying with a trouble I would keep;
Tell him that every leaden hour to me
Is heavy as the last that I shall see!

Ah, death awaits me; if he raise me not
Above this dreaded tomb and its dark plot,
Long I shall sleep with my sweet dream in vain.
Alas, O Love, make known to him my pain!

I saw him triumphant, and since those hours
None but the night-shade plucked I have of flowers;
Not once the courage have I had to speak;
The word unspoken makes my heart to break,
Of which I feel so much oppressed that I
Kill every dying thought with a sick sigh.

Tell me, who knows if on my pallid face
His eyes my Sorrow's shadow ere did trace?
I would I had the courage to confess
To him my love, and my poor heart's distress!

O love, since thou wert never willing to
Grant me that joy my sadness begged of you,
That in my heart my loving lord had read,
Nor seen me drown my pain with tears I shed,
Tell him, at least, and make him know 'tis true,
Had I not seen him I were living, too.
Tell him that once a maid Sicilian
Beheld him fight and prove himself a man;
Tell him I would in his proud thoughts remain,
That I die making known to him my pain!

ROUNDELAY

Ever was there delight of heart like this,
Manon to see asleep within my arms?
The pillow's scented with her naughty head;
Her heart-throbs beat her joy's alarms;
Over her face a dream of wonder's spread.

So goes to sleep a flower of woodbine wild,
Within its cup imprisoning a bee;
With a more charming task was time beguiled,
Never was there.

But day is come, and the vermilion dawn
Its springtime posy opens to the wind;
With comb in hand and her bright jewels on,
Manon before her glass forgets me soon:
Alas! love without morrow nor decline
Ever was there?

1842.

TO MADAME G.

ROUNDELAY

WITHIN about ten years from now
Somewhat less cruel will you be;
Ten years is a long spell, I vow.
In that time love may come to thee,
And set the clock ahead, you see.

Your loveliness now none may spurn;
It's full of smiles, it wants but tears;
More than one piece of news we learn
Within ten years.

Of lover, then you will confess
The perfect model I will be;
Too stupid for unfaithfulness,
Too homely for inconstancy;
But still too beautiful you'll be,
Within ten years!

1842.

TO MADAME G.

SONNET

Of all the things we lovers do,
None is so foolish as to pack up things,
And leave the jay for where the cat-bird sings,
Our baggage keeping us e'er in a stew.
And yet our deeds, our blindness, prove 'tis true;
Why should the happy bird take to his wings,
Leaving the south for where the north sun swings
Here for a day, there for a day or two?

I prize them, all in all, a stocking white
Well-drawn; and then a silken ribbon gay
O'er a white dress, and finger-nails aglow;
One thought I find a source of keen delight,
A warrant 'gainst confusion and dismay—
When we are deep in love, that's all we know.

1842.

TO MADAME M.

SONNET

E'EN should a bitter suffering make me
To long for sweet companionship; and should
Hope's flower adorn my path beside the wood,
And fill my spirit with the olden glee,
My wakened heart a-leaping to be free,
Would run with Chance the ways of hardihood,
A tingling fire a-kindling in my blood
When your fair face again mine eyes should see:

No, never could myself so blinded be
To my own faults and sheer unworthiness,
That I should pay your beauty any suit
Save high respect. But should there come to thee
Moments of sorrow shadowed with distress,
These lips will then in sympathy be mute.

1843.

TO MID-LENT

I

Now fades the carnival, but blooms the rose;
On all the hills the grass divinely grows;
The winter's pleasures now will swiftly die,
And tinkling sleigh-bells passing swiftly by,
But herald the approach of Spring's bright reign,
When summer flowers all will bloom bright again.

II

But grumble not when boisterous March draws nigh,
E'en though the farmer waits with anxious eye,
While bitter winds and gentle suns and rain
Are trying hard supremacy to gain.
The waking world a tender child appears,
Now laughs and sings amid its maiden tears.

III

In March, the trembling, wild anemone
Lifts up her head the budding world to see;
While gentle zephyrs floating on the air
Now kiss the flowers and cheeks of maidens fair,

Who from warm boudoirs, wrapped in slothful ease,
Are swaying forth to gather 'neath the trees.

IV

More joyous still, though fewer, grow the balls,
And later in the night the lofty halls
With music ring; we dance more ardently;
The waltzer fair now sways more languidly.
The lips more generous, the eyes more bold,
Fatigue delights, love warms the heart once cold.

V

So sweet the pain of bidding love adieu,
That mortals fain would die, if this be true.
'Tis in Mid-Lent, the season bleak and mild,
That, after feast and laughter, pleasure's child
Should write an ardent poem on waltz and love,
Gaily prepare to greet the gods above.

VI

But who has power to sing these steps of thine?
The vulgar mind ignores all grace divine.
Fair German nymph, attired in golden shoes,
Of waltz and poetry thou art the Muse.
Ambrosia drinkers of another day,
To dance with thee worthy alone were they.

VII

When on the cithara the bacchanal antique
Loosened his daughter's tresses, Cadmus, Greek
Beauty had right to dance before the gods;
If one profane at sound of music nods,
Or ventures in the choirs, the chief priestess
With steel thyrsus smote his audaciousness.

VIII

It is not thus in our coarse festivals;
The maids to-day allow loose recitals,
Where they are handled without grace or pride,
And all who will in our quadrilles may glide.
We lose the respect due to beauty's power;
With noisy pleasures cause delight's deflower.

IX

As long as with us reigned the Gothic step,
'Twere happy to observe the minuet;
Our fathers kept it during Thermidor,
When the Republic danced to cannon's roar,
And when la Tallien, with nimble spring,
Made with bare feet her golden anklets ring.

X

But other times and customs and cadence
Have followed common law, as well as chance;
Waltz, with a stroke of pen, has dethroned dance:
The while the universe, in league 'gainst France,

Fatigued itself to give our land a king,
Many complain against the foolish thing.

XI

I would prefer, seeing she is our guest,
That the young goddess should be honored best,
Our steps be regulated by her voice;
Let none abuse such sweet delight of choice,
Nor crush the contour of the breast that charms,
Nor see abduction in her partner's arms.

XII

Our rudeness and indifference combined,
We must accuse; we have a fickle mind,
Which, smitten by fancy, feeds on endless
change;
Disorder should with elegance exchange.
I would at least that each duchess in France
Could waltz as well as German butchers dance.

March, 1838.

IDLE YEARNINGS

Now since, unhappy poet, 'tis thy trade,
In times of storm, where mouth is silent made,
While the arm speaks, and fiction's airy form
Flies like a dream from action's noisy storm;
Since 'tis thy trade to make out of thy soul
A prostitute, and since thy joy or dole
Alike demand to come forth from thy soul;
At least may actor, wearing shameful mask,
Not downward drag thy thought, deface his task.
But put upon the stage the pillory he asks;
And let no trick, no veil the man conceal.
Leave to old men without the nobler zeal
This spider-work, and all the cobweb slight
In which is wrapped the pride that fears the light.
No altar, tripod, room for the profane;
Thy Muse shall smash the lute of courtesan,
And fearless raise the hymn of liberty;
With bare feet let her march like Verity!

O Machiavel! thy steps shall still resound
In San Casciano's paths, deserted ground.

'Neath burning skies whose withering air devours
The dry soil, tilling vainly the long hours,
Thy hand, a-weary digging in the soil,
Would wipe thy brow at night succeeding toil;

And misery's daughter, vile and slothful heir,
Would slowly dog thy steps, and everywhere
Thy heart-blood streaming pure, would drink alone;
"Who am I?" thou didst write. "Give me a stone,
A rock to roll; it is of tombs the peace
From which I fly; I lift arms tired of ease."
So is it, Machiavel, I cry with thee:
Mediocrity, who, as his property,
Thee only to life's gambling hall has brought,
Is coward if he says not "All, or naught."
I'm young, and I succeed, and at midway
I'm tired of plodding, turn, and fain would stay.
To know all men is to despise, no doubt;
That is an old man's right I am without.
But what am I to think? There is one wight
I can entirely, always, know aright,
On whom my judgment may awake your trust:
'Tis I myself—despise myself I must.

What have I done? what learned? So swift is time,
Not thinking of the road the child will climb,

Believes it endless, seeing not the bound,
And all at once a limpid spring is found.
He halts, he bends, and sees an old man there.
What shall I say? When I have borne my care,
When I shall cry, "Alas! too late my toil!"
And when this blood with which my veins would boil,
And which shall cry in rage against repose,
Comes to a pause, and, frozen, never flows,
Old age, for what does thy experience serve?
What use, vain specter, tending now to swerve
Toward the common tomb of men, if death,
When life comes forth, returning nothing, saith,
And was there not, then, in this gambling game,
One player by the fate so beaten tame,
As, meeting me upon the sill of life,
Could say, "Begone! I'm ruined in the strife!"

O Greece! Of arts, idolatry, the land,
Of my insensate vows the country grand,
Born was I for the flowers upon thy front,
Which crowned the waves of azure Hellespont,
A citizen of thy antiquity,
And by the walls my soul flits like the bee.
O Greece, thy people's tongues may wholly die;
We may forget the name of mountain high,
Ransack the bosom of thy yellow fields,
And all at once may find the gift it yields—

Some woodland god, or yet some Venus lost.
The words that came from Phidias' heart alone
Will always living be, and ever known;
The marbles learned and thy will ne'er forget.
Where are, old Italy, so tranquil set,
The days when Rome within her courts could please
To guard the arts, those gods the sons of ease?
When painters oft to all the cities went,
On building palaces and altars bent,
Triumphant, honored, gods among all men;
When all they did engendered marvels; when
Rome fought with Venice and against Lombards—
Then was a time of blessing for the arts.
Then Michael Angelo, through watching old,
All pale amid the dead, would scalpel hold,
Would seek the life within this human naught,
Would lift his head with meditation wrought,
To cast a look of anger, envying desire,
On palaces where from the altar mild
From far, Raphael on his rivals smiled.
There lived Correggio, poor, and so modest,
Toiled for his heart and left to God the rest;
Giorgione proud, showing to young Titian
From bosomed seas his sky Venetian;
Bartolommeo, in the dust alone,
Broke his young heart against the altar-stone;
And when Raphael would ask him of his art,
Would answer not, but point to skies apart.

Oh, happy times! Oh, times I love anew!
My shirking hands might work perhaps for you;
To-day for whom? For what? My maker who?
The artist trader is; art, trading too.
A simulacrum pale, a copy vile
Appears beneath Italia's sunny smile.
Our works of years, our glories, live a day;
In Europe all is dead, and love astray.
Whoe'er ye be, ye whom genius and fate
Rush onward toward the unhappy poet-state,
Fling far from you and boldly drive away
Sincerity; and see that no one may
Behold the blood-drops falling from your heart;
If not, you'll find the shortest joys that start
Cost dear, while wisdom's friendly to repose,
While hangmen's work the indifferent man well knows.
And thrice, thrice happy be the man whose thought
Can by the sword or saber edge be taught.
How he the crazy dreamers must despise,
Who mold in lifeless mud, and would disguise
A phantom vile, a nightmare, portrait rough,
And stop and swell with pride, and cry, "Enough!"
Now what is thought, when action would begin?
The one recoils, the other strives to win;
And at the sight of dread reality
Takes up the sword for every combat free;

The first, frail idol, which a mote could daunt,
Turns from the way and veils her lifeless front.
Bent o'er thy silent harp, O Weber, die!
Mozart awaits thee. Child, or poet high,
Whoe'er thou art, or man, if thy heart beat,
Throw down thy lyre, to battle turn thy feet!
Shade of times past, thou art not of this age.
Hear we the pilot sing when tempests rage?
To action! Evil! Good remarks unknown,
For careless ills shall other ills atone.
And cured be he who gave corrupted sense!
Ill seeks for ill; who suffers us shall aid.
Man may hate man, and fly, but yet is led,
In pain, to give a hand in others' pain.
'Tis all for pity, word with which they lure,
And all that endless eloquence impure,
Which men with joyous heart give those who wail,
As rich to beggars bread, of small avail;
Who could ask that? How could the common crew,
When you are suffering, seek to pity you—
Those men unfit, who suffering never knew?

Go to an open place, and there display
A form more mangled than a martyr's clay.
Misshapen, foul, upon a hurdle cart,
And gasping soul just ready to depart;
The crowd will come, and if the pain is true,
Is satisfied. Your ills, which you may rue,

In all cause horror, pity in the few.
But change your way: let them a soul surmise
All bruised by grief; a pain without disguise
In youthful heart; regrets in old men rife;
Say that, without a mother or a wife,
Not knowing where to pour, before you part,
The tears now welling in your bursting heart,
Before sunset, perhaps, you will not go:
Now who will have the time to hear your wo?

Men will believe the flowing blood, not tears,
A friend goes by, to know you not appears.
And art thou bursting, heart? Hot tears, think thou?
Amid my writing flow and bathe me now.
Does the sword fail or hand, coward confessed,
Glide weakly falling o'er my naked breast?
—No, naught of that. But yet as far as hate
Of this blind destiny, of shameless fate
Shall go, I wish to go—I'll show the strength
To guide it so, it shall feel shame at length.

1830.

SOUVENIR

I WEEP, but with no bitterness I weep,
To look again upon thee, hallowed spot,
O dearest grave, and most of men forgot,
Where buried love doth sleep.

What witchcraft think you that this desert hath,
Dear friends, who take my hand and bid me stay,
Now that the gentle wont of many a day
Would lead me down this path?

Here are the wooded slopes, the flowering heath,
The silver footprints on the silent sand,
The loitering lanes, alive with lovers' breath,
Where first I kissed her hand.

I know these fir-trees, and this mossy stone,
And this deep gorge, and all its winding ways;
These friendly giants, whose primeval moan
Hath rocked my happy days.

My footsteps' echo in this tangled tree
Gives back youth's music, like a singing bird;
Dear haunts, fair wilderness her presence stirred,
Did you not watch for me?

I will not dry these tear-drops: let them flow,
And soothe a bitterness that yet might last,
And o'er my waking-weary eyelids throw
The shadow of the past.

My useless plainings shall not make to cease
The happy echoes of the vows we vowed:
Proud is this forest in its noble peace,
And my heart too is proud.

Give o'er to hopeless grief the bitter hours
You kneel to pray upon a brother's tomb:
Here blows the breath of love, and graveyard flowers
Not in this garden bloom.

See! The moon rides athwart a bank of cloud.
Thy veils, fair Queen of Night, still cling to thee,
But soon thou loosenest thy virgin shroud
And smilest to be free.

As the rich earth, still dank with April rain,
Beneath thy rays exhales day's captive balm,
So from my purgèd soul, as pure, as calm,
The old love breathes again.

Where are they gone, those ghosts of sorrow pale?
Where fled the passion that my heart defiled?

Once in the bosom of this friendly vale
I am again a child.

O might of times, O changes of the year,
Ye undo sorrow and the tears we shed,
But, touched with pity, on our blossoms sere
Your light feet never tread.

Heavenly solace, be for ever blest!
I had not thought a sword could pierce so far
Into the heart, and leave upon the breast
So sweet and dear a scar.

Far from me the sharp word, the thankless mind,
Of vulgar sorrow customary weed,
Shroud that about the corse of love they wind
Who never loved indeed.

Why, Dante, dost thou say the saddest curse
Is joy remembered in unhappy days?
What grief compelled thee to this bitter verse
In sorrow's harsh dispraise?

O'er all the worlds is light bereft of gladness
When sad eclipses cast their blight on us?
Did thy great soul, in its immortal sadness,
Speak to thee, Dante, thus?

No, by this sacred light upon me cast!
Not in thy heart this blasphemy had birth.

It is the truest happiness on earth
To have a happy past.

What! When the soul forlorn finds yet a spark
'Mid the hot ashes of her stifled sighs,
And doth that flame, her only treasure, mark
With captivated eyes,

Bathing her wounds in the delicious past
That mirrors brokenly her loves again,
Thy cruel word her feeble joy would blast
And turn to bitter pain?

And couldst thou wrong thine own Francesca so,
Wrong thy bright angel with a word like this,
Her whose lips, parting to rehearse her woe,
Broke an eternal kiss?

What, righteous Heaven, is our human thought,
And to the love of truth who yet will cling,
If every pain or joy e'er shunned or sought
Turns to a doubtful thing?

How can you live, strange souls that nothing awes?
In midst of haste and passion, song and mirth,
Nor all the stars of heaven give you pause,
Nor all the sins of earth;

But when upon your fated way you meet
Some dumb memorial of a passion dead,

That little pebble stops you, and you dread
To bruise your tender feet.

You cry aloud that life is but a dream,
And, to the truth awaking, wring your hands,
And grieve your bubble but a moment stands
Upon time's foaming stream.

Poor fools! That moment when your soul could shake
The numbing fetters off that it enthrall,
That fleeting moment was your all in all—
Oh, mourn not for its sake!

But rather mourn your weight of earthly dross,
Your joyless toil, your stains of blood and mire,
Your sunless days, your nights without desire;
In these was utter loss.

What profit have you of your late lament,
And what from heaven do your murmurs crave,
The plaints you sow upon the barren grave
Of every pleasure spent?

Life is a dream, and all things pass, I know:
If some fair splendor we be charmed withal,
We pluck the flower, and at the breath we blow
Its withered petals fall.

Ay, the first kiss and the first virgin vow
That ever mortals upon earth did swear,

That whirlwind caught which strips the frozen
bough
And stones to sand doth wear.

A witness to the lovers' troth was night,
With changeful skies, o'ercast with mystery,
And stars unnumbered, that an inward light
Devours unceasingly.

They saw death hush the song bird in the glade,
Blast the pale flower, and freeze the torpid worm,
And choke the fountain where the image played
Of their forgotten form.

Yet they joined hands above the mouldering clod,
Blind with love's light that flashed across the
sky,
Nor felt the cold eye of the changeless God
Who watches all things die.

Fools! says the sage: thrice blest! the poet says.
What wretched joy is to the faint heart dear
Whom noise of torrents fills with weak amaze
And the wind fills with fear?

I have seen beneath the sun more beauties fail
Than white sea foam or leaves of forest sere;
More than the swallows and the roses frail
Desert the widowed year.

Mine eyes have gazed on sights of deeper woe
Than Juliet dead within the gorgèd tomb,
And deadlier than the cup that Romeo
Drank to his love and doom.

I have seen my love, when all I loved had perished,
Who to a whited sepulchre is turned;
Seen the thin dust of all I ever cherished
In her cold heart inurned—

Dust of that faith which, in our bosoms furled,
The gentle night had warded well from doubt.
More than a single life, alas! a world
Was that day blotted out.

Still young I found her, and, men said, more fair;
In heaven's light her eyes could still rejoice,
And her lips opened, and a smile was there,
And sound as of a voice.

But not that gentle voice, that tender grace,
Those eyes I worshipped when they looked their prayer:
My heart still full of her, searched, searched her face
And could not find her there.

And still I could have gone to her, and cast
My arms about that chill and lifeless stone,

And cried, Where hast thou left it, faithless one,
Where hast thou left the past?

But no: it rather seemed as if by chance
Some unknown woman had that voice and eye;
I looked up into heaven; with cold glance
I passed that statue by.

Not without pangs of shame and bitterness
I watched her smiling shadow glide away;
But what of that? Immortal nature, say,
Have I loved therefore less?

On me the gods may now their lightnings fling,
They cannot undo truth, nor kill the past.
Like a wrecked sailor to a broken mast,
To my dead love I cling.

I make no question of what flowers may bloom,
What virtue from the seasons man may borrow,
What heavenly lamp may flood with light to-
morrow
The vault of this great tomb.

I only say: Here at this hour, one day,
I loved, and I was loved, and she was fair.
This treasure which no death can filch away
My soul to God shall bear.

[From *The Hermit of Carmel* and other poems, copyright, 1901, by Charles Scribner's Sons.]

STANZAS

By M. Charles Nodier

TO M. ALFRED DE MUSSET

I've read thy lively Odyssey—
What harmony!
I've read thy sounding sonnets, too—
God loveth thee!

For thee alone the charming Muse,
Whom thou hast wed,
Will still preserve thy dainty song
When thou art dead.

By an erroneous taste exiled,
Veiled with a pall,
To thine abode she softly goes
At dim night-fall.

There she will, in thine eager ear,
Her soul rehearse;
She lulls thee with the harmonies
Of glorious verse.

She knows the lullaby of life,
The songs the genii sing,

The tale of love, told by the lips
Of Peri conquering.

The amorous games, the dances lithe
Of shepherdesses young,
The legends of the olden time
Whence our ancestors sprung.

Then, happy in your company,
As one love-lorn,
She sings but to prolong her stay
Till morrow morn.

When in her opal chariot
Aurora roams,
In full pursuit of concealed choirs,
Of sprites and gnomes:

If, lacking etiquette, she finds
Your Muse unfled,
The timid one she noiseless hides;
Then wings are spread.

Beyond the spaces of the stars
Where she doth dwell,
She wafts melodious harmonies
In fond farewell.

Flee from the confines of the land
Of dreary prose;

Her journals, novels, and essays,
Are so morose.

The period flamboyant in vogue,
It sickens so,
The prosy, legislative speech,
Our cruel foe.

Avoid the stilted scale and rhyme
Of sons of Thoth,
Sworn experts in accurséd slang
Of Visigoth.

Flee pedants' pestilential law,
Haughty and cold,
Who would submit thy fairest charms
To compass old.

And may thy songs at eventide,
With love all crowned,
Soothe me again, and lull thy friend
To sleep profound!

JUNE, 1843.

ANSWER

TO M. CHARLES NODIER

Know'st thou two horrid female plagues—
And twins, they tell—
That one day Lucifer, enraged,
Cast out of hell?

The first is Fever, the wan-faced,
With heart of hare;
And one Insomnia, with eyes
That always stare.

No, not that fever amorous,
That joyous is,
That tumbles pillows until dawn,
And no yawn gives.

No, not that fair insomnia
Of genius sought,
Where Trilby comes, to hear thee sing
Thy latest thought.

'Tis fever which still swathes itself,
Yet shivers still,
And then, 'mid cushions and soiled sheets,
It sweats its fill.

The other, oyster-like, in shell
Doth yawning lie,
Dreams vaguely, or makes verses that
Are all awry.

And I have entertained this pair,
That would me flay
Completely during this past week
From day to day.

If they accuse me of neglect,
Then let that be;
My good excuse for answering naught
Is known to me.

Oh, do me not, I thee implore,
That injury
Of thinking that I faltered through
Neglect of thee.

Neglect, dulness, it seems to me,
Go hand in hand,
Dragging their insolent, slow steps
Across the land.

Most feel the barren ill they cause,
But if intent
To visit thee, ah, they dare not
For one moment.

Thy voice, at once so young and old,
From morbid woes

It comes to free me, debonair,
From dull repose,

Thy Muse, my friend, is finely French,
And so at ease;
It gives me back the strength of health,
And things that please.

My Muse recalls to me, half dead,
Abandonéd,
The fair days, and the moments bright
Of good times dead.

When, assembling to thy call,
Thy provost glance
Would see us rush from college wall,
Intent to dance;

Gay as the bird perched on a branch
At morning call,
We rose betimes, and soon aroused
The arsenal.

The head, coquettish and bedecked,
Of gay Marie,
Shone like a bluebell in the wheat,
Our own Trilby.

With fingers stained by the ink-well,
She'd sing and play;
Ah, well did she perform upon
The ivory.

Some one recited something good,
In verse or prose,
And then again began the dance,
How, no one knows.

Each of us, as future great man,
Or thinking so,
Learnéd far quicker to love thee
Than rhyming go.

Then in the workshop of romance
Each sang his song;
As amateur, or master, he
His own lyre rang.

We carved the seats, we broke the desks,
The windows, too;
With pen and scraper would deface
The whole purview.

Hugo then bore within his soul
His Notre Dame,
And then began the serious work
That led to fame.

De Vigny sang on sounding lyre
That man of pose,
Who died before he'd inside out
Turn his green hose!

Antony and loud-lunged Dante
With song beguiled;

Émile sketched quickly and, behold,
The crowd went wild.

With this strange subject in his mind,
A bonnet white,
And a dark eye—Sainte-Beuve composed
A sonnet bright.

And I of such great company
Unworthy was;
Chance brought me there, and Chance, indeed,
Defends my cause.

I wrote some ballads, addressed one
Unto the moon,
And one to Andalusian eyes
That grieved too soon.

Those lovely times held sadness, too,
And folly's rune;
But, true, the half of it is charged
To friendship boon.

Why is pale Memory alone
Seen to return
To those bright waves where Hope was launched—
Did its bark burn?

Friend of my youth, I know that thee
The bee has stung;

Thou canst not die, nor healed be;
Though old, yet young.

What hast thou done, old master mine,
To here survive?
Thy noble verses, despite time,
Sound twenty-five.

If ever that thy drooping head
Should white appear,
It will be as the almond-tree,
Dear Nodier.

What makes it white is not old age,
Not storms, or showers;
'Tis the fresh dew that falls in tears;
Upon the flowers.

August, 1843.

TO MADEMOISELLE ANAIS

ROUNDELAY

THAT nothing we may do shall pass
  Beneath the sacred portico
Without some injury, alas!
  From critic's tongues, that wagging go,
  Is axiomatic truth, we know.

Wherefore should this severeness be?
  Grétry avowed with happy thought;
"A little music seems to me
  Better by far to be than naught."

To my Louise this word applies;
  Upon the scenic boards he threw
Her small bouquet, with modest eyes.
  Seeing by you 'twas hither brought,
  The rest, in truth, is less than naught.

1849.

SONG

When one has lost, by mournful chance,
His hopefulness and glee,
The thing that will once more entrance
His soul, is melody.
Melody and beauty, they,
Far from care, bear one away.

More power a lovely face doth wield
Than doth an arméd host,
And purest happiness will yield
The voice that we love most.
Let thy belovéd sing to thee,
Soft, and low, and tenderly.

TO MADAME ——

WHO SENT IN JEST A THREE-FRANC PIECE TO THE AUTHOR

Fair Emilie, you sent of late
A well-swathed chick to me;
Your hand discreet, with formal state,
Had sealed it carefully.

The alms is somewhat light, I think,
And, spite of cleverness,
That dainty hand doth seem to shrink
From generous largess.

And if your offering you regard
As payment for some deed,
Or if you deem it a reward,
For money there's no need.

In future, Emilie, be sure,
If generous you'd be,
To give your largess to the poor
With eyes of charity.

But when real merit you do meet,
And think some alms you owe it,
Oh, then remember Marguerite
And Chartier, the poet!

He was an ugly man, 'tis said,
The lady a princess:
And better verse than I he made,
It hurts me to confess.

But if my pen some value has,
My heart has less, I fear;
And even at my prose, alas!
I am inclined to sneer.

So, keep your timid charity,
Your precious gold, for oh,
In opening your dainty hand,
A pearl you might bestow.

1835.

GOOD-BY, SUZON

Good-by, Suzon, my blooming rose,
Thou hast loved me for but eight days;
Briefest pleasures this world knows,
Oft deserve our warmest praise.
Know I not beneath the sun,
Whence my wandering steps may run,
Yet I'm going, little one,
Far and hurriedly from thee,
Ever speeding hastily.

I go, and on my lips I feel
Still thy burning last embrace;
Thy fair arms about me steal,
And I see thy saucy face.
Swift my throbbing heart beats on;
Gaily, Suzon, beats thine own;
Yet I'm going, little one,
Far from thee and hurriedly,
Ever dearly loving thee.

Click! click! 'Tis my horse we hear!
Child, I would that on my way
I this naughty head could bear,
With its perfumed locks that stray

O'er my hand; ah, thou, alone,
Smiling sprite, my heart doth own;
Yet, I'm going, little one,
Very far and fast from thee,
Ever laughing joyously.

How much of melancholy charm
In thy piquant farewell lies!
To my soul thy tears are balm,
When thy heart is in thine eyes.
Then, thy glances, ah, my own,
Bid me live for thee alone;
Yet, I'm going, little one,
Very far, without sleeping,
Ever mourning, ever weeping.

Lest our love you should forget,
Just one moment longer hold it;
Then, like faded violet,
In thy snowy bosom hold it.
Good-by; all is said and done;
Only memory shall run
Always with me, little one.
Far and fast I'll hasten on,
Ever loving thee alone.

1844.

TO A FLOWER

What wilt of me, dear floweret,
Tender and lovely souvenir?
Half-faded waif and half coquette,
Who left thee lying here?

To this lone, quiet hiding-place,
A farewell journey hast thou made?
Upon what heart was thy sad face
In its first freshness softly laid?

And art thou but a withered thing,
Dead for all time within this tomb?
Or wilt again, in happy spring,
In new-born freshness sweetly bloom?

Poor flow'r, thy whiteness hath a look
Of desolated innocence,
As if, by happiness forsook,
Death were thy only recompense.

Perchance thou dost some message bear;
Thou mayst impart it—I'm discreet;
Tell'st thou of one who brought thee here,
In language of thy perfume sweet?

If it is even so, speak low,
And thy mysterious tale impart;
If not, make no response, but oh,
Sleep soft and light upon my heart!

Too well to me that hand is known,
So full of coquetry and grace,
That in this fresh and dainty bow
Hath tied this riband 'neath thy face.

That hand, my little floweret,
Nor Phidias, nor Praxiteles,
The sister to it, ever met,
Save that of Venus, if you please.

She's fair and sweet, nor these alone;
Sincere she is, 'tis said, and more;
To him who wins her for his own,
She can unlock a treasure-store.

But she's severe as she is fair;
Let's dread her anger, flower, pray;
Of some misstep we'd best beware;
Say nothing—let me dream away.

1838.

TO M. REGNIER

OF THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE, AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS DAUGHTER

What sorrow, then, is this which grieves my heart?
We through the bond of intellect alone
Acquainted were; and when together thrown,
His brightness made my sluggish blood to start.
So to the theater I repaired—in part
To see him play, in part, I frankly own,
By chance—and heard him with consummate skill
Invest the lines he spoke with deep satire—
From Pancrace to Scapin at his desire.
Why, scarcely knowing him, is it I thrill
With grief at news of his misfortune dire?
E'en that within his arms, all cold and still,
His child lies dead? God knows! Within man's mind
The noblest thought of all is undefined.

1849.

SONNET

Beatrice Donato was her tender name,
Whose form possessed the contour of a smile;
Within her bosom dwelt a faithful flame,
In body chaste, a spirit without guile.

The child of Titian, an enduring name
He gave her by this portrait; thus procured,
He ceased for ay to paint, so that her fame
By future works of his be unobscured.

Reader, whoe'er you be, if you have loved,
Upon my mistress gaze, nor censure me,
But answer, if yours is as sweet a miss.
Behold how cheap is glory valued;
This portrait is not worth, you will agree,
Although surpassing sweet, its model's kiss.

1838.

SONNET

To love but one, and be by that one loved;
To walk from day to day the single path,
And never bitter find the aftermath
That comes to hearts that have but wayward proved;
To find in one sweet flower, where bees have roved,
The sweets of all the fields, and miss the wrath
Of dread inconstancy, that each one hath
Encountered who Byronically hath moved:

Of such a course, alas! my love, I dreamed
That you and I contentment sweet might find,
Our little world the whole big world of man;
Next to what is, is that that has but seemed—
Is pleasure of the heart, or of the mind?
Yet we did love by our sweet love's own plan.

ON THE BIRTH OF THE COUNT OF PARIS

So many days of mourning, hope, and fear,
So many efforts lost and sufferings drear,
Art not aweary, land of France so dear?
Shall grown-up children's endless fickleness
The world some day with peace and calmness
bless?

Thy fate, thy story, dost thou comprehend,
And count the fifty years that soon shall end?
Did they enough of wretched glory send?
If not in pity of thy glorious day,
At least in sheer fatigue thy footsteps stay!

Dost thou recall those days of dread alarms
In eighty-nine, when tocsins rang to arms?
Of yesterday the spring of bloody harms,
Where Paris christened freedom's rising crest?
Feelst thou the blood still flowing from thy
breast?

Hath he full-fed thy haughty fire,
Hath he with battles cloyed thy fell desire,
That daring man who made a world-empire,

Like plowman crossing up and down the field,
Whose plowshare tears and brings the greater
yield?

If thou sometimes didst need those warlike shows,
Were they sufficient, wasted Europe's throes,
The earth disputed, Memphis, Moscow's snows,
Beside our hearths the stranger's twofold seat,
Shaking the bloody snow from off his feet?

And if to-day thou needest elements new,
Is it enough in ragged bits to hew
Whatever bears a name, love, glory, too,
Religion, freedom, tyranny, consume,
Ransack all things, and rifle e'en the tomb?

Enough for thee the theory's deceit,
And sophisms monstrous, planned our souls to
cheat,
Specters republican from times effete,
Abuse of all the rights, the visions bad
Of frantic butchers, or of children mad?

Was it enough to see, in fifty years,
Robespierre and Bonaparte peers,
The white-haired Charles in exile disappears—
To mimic London, Athens, Sparta, Rome?
Is it not time to build a Frenchman's home?

If it is not enough, take sword and glaive,
And frame thy scaffolds, wake thy soldiers brave
To arms! That age at dawn its flag shall wave,

That Murder, License, our most fiendish foes,
Blood-sated next, may leave us in repose!

If God hath not our suffering useless made,
If from our ills some good has always strayed,
If skies are tranquil after storms are laid,
If, when upon a fertile ground they stream,
Tears of the past may make the future teem:

Profit in thy experience; learn to spell,
Thou whom "a queen," in tenderest farewell,
Once called the pleasant land of France,
Know then thyself, learn to be happy hence,
And frankly dare to bless thy providence.

Let him who will, declare thy spirits quail,
That peace enfeebles and thy strength doth fail;
Who think so least, are those who tell the tale;
They know thou art erect and ready for the spring,
Unfit to break thy might, they discord bring.

So let them fret, cheap passion's foulest gang;
They do but parody the old harangue;
Their comedy doth cause a chilling pang,
And when, arms crossed, they action to thee preach,
They, as sole truth, their own ambition teach.

But what to thee are dressed-up phrases fine?
Hast sold thy corn, thy cattle, and thy wine?
Are laws respected, and is freedom thine?

Fearest thou for fields by neighbor pillaged?
The master has his home, the worker bread?

If we have these, remaining things are few;
And yet we have our needs; our ramparts through
All things of ours the jealous world would view;
Paris doth fill the world, and if she rest,
To wake her glory, art she needs the best.

Higher than in our time rise arts again?
When did arms more than now at labor strain?
Freedom in thinking? When did more obtain?
Fools would disown both things and men who live;
We write a page our children's sons to give.

To-day we hear our cannon roaring slow;
Let Europe hear—that roar she ought to know!
O France, a child is born thy crown to seek.
And if men hear my voice's accents weak,
It is before his cradle I would speak.

His fearless grandsire is the people's king,
Whom for eight years we see pilot daring,
To show to us the way to which we cling.
His sire is near the throne to grasp the brand,
And all the wretched know his mother's hand.

It is but one son more Heaven gives to thee;
France, ope to him thy arms—no flattery!
Lift up thy bruised breast, and gently mild
Give with a smile, revered mother country,
One drop of milk to him, the new-born child.

August 29, 1838.

TO MADAME C^NE T

ROUNDELAY

Upon its plate a soft and tender thing,
A pâté warm, with most attractive look,
Some distance off, led me to thank the cook.
I sought it. Your instinctive reckoning
Made you arise and wished-for morsel bring.

Jove, who in heaven was with wine intent,
Thus seeing Venus at the table wait,
Let fall his glass, in his bewilderment,
Upon his plate.

Might I thereon pay you a compliment?
Where grace is lacking, how can it one express?
For what is pleasing, words are fittest dress,
But looks alone for highest bliss are meant,
And repartee I had not that moment
Upon the plate.

Fontainebleau, 1847.

AFTER READING A BOOK

I

Thy book is firm and true—it makes for love;
There are so many babblers now in print,
Of high, great names, but empty sound to prove,
And who shall hit a drum, at war to hint?
Ah, it is sweet to dream of thy good book,
And feel one's heart alive the world to brook.

II

Say, Marquise and Lisette, have you not read
This new heart's brief, so fashioned by the head?
For women charming, sweet, and so absurd,
News of their news the poets ere have heard—
The poets who go, noses in the air,
Dreaming of what their dreaming makes more fair.

III

What are they, pray, to us, these men of talk,
Who on life's blackboard make their marks with chalk?
They find their solace in a lady's sigh,
Soldiers of words that with inaction die.
They sing aloud; the earth at least must come
To answer them, else were the world e'er dumb.

IV

What use is noise? what matters glory, too?
We die in fact, but live in story true.
What signifies a boy knowing history?
The inkstand well is full of mystery.
To chiseled marble youth forever bows:
Not admiration—love the whole world vows.

V

Long live the older novel, blessed page,
Which some one's lady-love, reclining, reads;
A plant that richer grows from age to age,
Fine fancy's harvest blooming in the seeds,
The ever-ripening wisdom of the sage.
Long live the drama Margot weeping leads!

VI

Oh! oh! Some one will say 'tis rather hard;
'Tis nothing much to write a pretty rhyme,
The playful banter of the idling bard;
Is talent sent to college, waste of time?
Has he a bonnet 'bove a petticoat?
I'm sorry thus to pen a saucy note.

VII

What makes our women happy, never say
Aloud, but tell it in the whispering;
And with duplicity they often pay
Sincerity; they have been known to sing

Pathetic ditties when themselves are glad.
Alas! alack! their beauty drives us mad!

VIII

Beauty is everything, Plato declared,
And his opinion all the world has shared:
Naught's beautiful but truth, says the poet;
The dreamers dream it so, and so know it.
'Tis said naught but the beautiful is true,
And beauty makes it so for me and you.

IX

When first the sun began his splendid flight,
He made the thing he saw his own delight,
Revealing all the good that Heaven had done,
Beauty and love both blended as in one:
Through wonder of this radiance, genius came,
And Margot saw it fuel of the flame.

X

I might say more, my theme to stretch and vary,
And make my poesy more statuary;
'Tis little but to love, and small to please,
When Helicon will preach the heart to ease.
We must talk nonsense, that, alas! at least,
So shall we bring plain food to the mind's feast.

XI

And he who knows not when the stifled breeze
Sighs in the tangled wood and stirs the trees,

'Tis time alone to wander, and to sing
The song that lighter makes the warbler's wing;
For, sadder than Ophelia ever was,
More giddy than a page, with love the cause.

XII

Ah, who sees not in the empurpled dawn,
A form adored, afloating, open-armed,
He who, when slumbering, his senses gone,
Feels something hovering o'er himself, unharmed,
And he who hears not, heareth to no end,
A voice within the river call him " Friend."

XIII

Now he, whose soul is not forever loving,
Who has not, for all wealth, a consolation,
May come and rest his head, his heart approving,
On a brow young and fresh, in meditation;
And from the golden tresses of a head
A life and beauty in the heart has sped.

XIV

He who does not, amid the burning nights
Which make the star of Venus pale with love,
Rise suddenly, and without reason's lights,
Walk forth and with his many tears to prove
His heart is full of pity for the ills,
While with the infinite the whole world thrills:

XV

Ah, let him scribble and erase at will;
He may, much as he likes, work on dull lays,
With little whittlings the big time fill,
And thus go on e'en unto Père Lachaise,
Drag at his heels all stupids here below;
If, mighty man, you will; the poet, no!

XVI

An ugly family are these echo-folks,
These apish people wearing others' yokes,
These footlight fellows who would actors be;
The word-man, biggest fool of all is he.
By Horace lashed, and Aristophanes,
These versifiers scribbling but to please.

XVII

Is there, I ask of you, a case more sad
Than that of dullard who would be so mad,
And miss in verse what he in prose had hit?
I've made bad verses, 'cause it was my wit;
When I did make them poor, I wished them so—
No bad example fathered them, I trow.

XVIII

Oh, what a shameful trade, my lads, it is
To drag through lengthy words a hint of bliss,
As if to make a pack-mule of the brain,
O'erburdening it as with the heart's light strain;

As if the fancy were a chainéd dog,
Or one should cloud his morning with a fog.

XIX

Oh, thou but young in death, in life not old,
And in thine early tomb now scarce grown cold,
Sad lover o' death, poor Leopardi,*
Had you but phrased for sake of harmony,
And thus made cruel war upon the thought,
What havoc in thy heart thou wouldst have wrought!

XX

Such was thy quiet genius' strength, forsooth,
Such thy chaste love but for the rugged truth,
That 'mid Ansonia's lazy, languid speech,
Thou wouldst nor lesson learn nor lesson teach;
And would allow but accents clear and strong
To vibrate through the wonder of thy song.

XXI

And yet there is with it a sweetness sad,
Nerina's voice, that made thy young heart glad—
Bright-eyed Nerina, who made thee grow pale,
Thine own " eternal sigh " whom thou didst hail.
Dim showed her painted house to thy sad eye—
A blinding sight it was to see her die!

XXII

And thou also didst die, lone, desolate,
But ever calm and good, nor railed at fate;

*One of the most remarkable poets of modern Italy, died in 1837.

Companioned by thy song, thou journeyed on,
A-welcoming the sunset as the dawn;
And thou didst nobly with thy latest breath
Enjoy thy going and the Charm of Death.

NOVEMBER, 1843.

VERSES ON THREE STEPS OF ROSE-TINTED MARBLE

Since Adam old, that cruel man,
Had lost a life on Eden's plan
Where Eve, around an apple fine,
Gamboled without a crinoline,
I believe that not on earth
Is there a spot where trees have birth
More renowned, more visited,
Better made, more frequented,
More possessed of things that please,
That give the mind and body ease;
More described, more read, more sung,
Than, Versailles, thy glades among.
Gods and shepherds! pebbles! shells!
Satyr, and the grumbling elves,
Yew-trees standing in a row,
Fountains where the roses blow,
Hedges geometrical and high,
Where on Sundays, summer-long,
Yawn the great Parisian throng!
Fantoms of Roman emperors,
In stately marble corridors,
Pale fountain nymphs, where poet's taste

Guided the sculptor on the waist,
By water sprays in crystal bands.
Turnstiles where lovely bushes grow,
Shorn shrubs wherein the thrushes go
In tears, to warble their sweet songs,
Nigh to the sound of brazen gongs,
Where stand the ceremonious gods,
To keep dry 'neath the locust pods.
O chestnut trees! you will not fear
To have your foliage appear
Less quiet, should a knight of verse
Its great magnificence rehearse.
Now, by Apollo bright, I swear,
By all the sacred valley here;
By you, ye wicked Naiades,
You of smooth stones the Pleiades;
By the old masters of ballets,
That lead the fawns on green alleys;
By thou, thyself, majestic pile,
Where only paintings dwell in style;
By Neptune, with his trident armed,
To sing of you be not alarmed.
Too well I know what makes you sad;
The verses wrote on you are bad;
So many sonnets have been sung,
So many changes have been rung,
In ballads, roundelays, and odes,
Wherein your glories were but goads,
That deafened your o'erburdened ears,
'Tis plain to see you've slept for years.

In spots where weariness has rest,
I there have made a dreaming quest;
The scene so sweet suggested there
Some other dreamland in the air.
But, do you remember, friend,
Leading where land and water blend,
Those steps of marble, tinted rose,
Where a great sheet of water flows,
Toward the Orangery, where
Rises the palace splendid there?
It was that way I try to name,
That king without an equal came
Sometimes, at sunset, to behold
The day depart in robes of gold
(If, indeed, in royal sight,
The sun dared to retire at night).
How pretty are those marble steps!
Cursed by Heaven, the foot that trips
In foul defilement on the stone!
They seem the dais of a throne.
But oh, with what delight, the tints
Of block half-broken! See the glints
Of color in those azure veins,
Light, fine, and polished; life remains
Running beneath the pallid pink,
And in the marble whiteness sink.
Such is the breast robust and nude
Of this Diana, huntress good,
She in whose veins the blood divine
Gives shape to beauty quite as fine.

Now I would have you not conclude
That the steps to which I allude
Are in that stairway remote,
A solitude that glory smote,
Where that king, who waited not,
One day waited, anxiously,
Condé crowned with victory!
Mine are close to vase of white,
Neatly carved, a splendid sight.
Is it modern or antique,
Is it Romanesque or Greek?
Well, I like to see it there,
Glad it is no Gothic scare,
But the guardian of the steps
Proudly shelters in the depths
Of love, or solitude, who rest
On rose-tinted marble's breast.

Tell us, graceful steps renowned,
Of the kings and prelates gowned,
And the marquises in state,
With each fair, ambitious mate,
What of all that courtly host
Now almost to memory lost?
As they touched you they weighed light;
Velvet, or robes of ermine white,
Grazed your delicate contours,
When the court played out-of-doors,
Which did lead in beauty's van,
Was it the queen, fair Montespan?

Was it Hortense, with story gay,
Or Maintenon with breviary,
Or Fontange with a ribbon there;
Marble, hast thou seen La Vallière?
De Perabire, or de Sabran,
Which best knew how to please a man?
The Regent for himself was wise,
Nor solve the problem for a prize.
Say, have you seen puissant Voltaire,
That stickler when it came to prayer,
That voice of people badly ruled,
With fighting Christ he never cooled;
Sexton of temple of Cythère,
Presenting to the Pompadour,
For deeds, fair words, an empty gaze?
Have you seen, at the Hermitage,
Chubby Du Barry out for fun,
Drink milk, and in her bare feet run
In joyance on the flower-grown sward?
O Steps, which know our ancient guard
In pompous days of long ago,
What happy folks in thickets go?
How many lords and lackeys grand,
Moved at their noble dames' command?
How many in red heels and gold?
How many sighs and slanders told?
How many plumes and skull-caps, where
Furbelows and breeches filled the air?
What powdered wigs 'neath archivolts,
How many people without dolts?

O reign august of periwig,
The bourgeois who cares not a fig
For thee, deserves on his flat nape
To have an everlasting cape.
And thou, gay-humored century
Of starch, a long inventory,
They who would scorn thy powder white,
Could give sweet Cupid fearful fight.
What are your sentiments, O stone?
In spite of me, I still alone
Conceive the fate which laid thee there;
Destined for thee purpose more fair,
In countries where the sun shines hot,
Near Greek or Latin temple spot,
The graceful feet of maiden sweet,
Perfumed with thyme, to time they beat.
In touching you with sandal soft,
A pleasure thrilled more subtle, oft,
Than satin slipper of marquise
Who lives alone for body's ease.
Rather for footprints of priestess
Nature had formed in hot caress
Thy block of marble, virgin stone,
To which genius gives life alone.
When trowel of the workman stark
Sealed thee within this muddy park,
Here, planting thee, despite the gods,
Mansard insulted their abodes,
But, were thy noble substance sought,
By just Praxiteles be wrought

Some splendid deity of worth;
When through thee tore the savage saw,
Guided by grim Commerce's paw,
They little knew were wounding sore
Some Venus slumbering in thy core:
The purple tint, which makes thee red,
Comes from the blood which Venus shed.
How true it is that anything
Is trampled like an underling,
The rock whereon the eagle stands,
The rose-leaf, or the law's commands.
Does nature's kindness cease the day
Her work is perfected? Then say,
Does chance control thereafter still,
When the creative force is nil?
Say, does the bitter hurricane
Cast up the pearl from roaring main,
To have it crushed by fisherman?
And is it that a vulgar man
May desecrate all things on earth
Destroy the things that gave him birth.

February, 1849.

THE THIRTEENTH OF JULY

I

Joy here below is ever young and new;
As much as grief grows old, so far 'tis true.
But yesterday the prince was swept from sight;
He hardly sleeps the sleep of endless night;
The angel-wings that bore him through the air,
Close not; of him to speak too soon we dare.

II

Sad was the day when on that little bier
This death untimely came to wake our fear.
Sad was the sight; the ancient cathedral
Was dressed in black, as for death's festival;
Sad was the noise when all the mourners kneel,
Romancers 'gan to sing, and tales to tell.

III

And we were silent, we, his childhood's friends,
While toward the somber vault he slowly wends,
Thoughts of the cradle us the coffin lends;
His shade, perhaps, could hear that deep silence
Which round his tomb fell on our hearts and sense.

IV

Now that day comes, than this one year more old,
To rouse our grief and strike our hearts with cold,
We must salute the day of bale untold.
When this young man died in his strength and flower,
From nothingness preserved by havoc's power,
And by his youth and by the ordained hour.

V

To whom, just God, can any say: We meet
To-morrow? Hope and Death each other greet,
And hand in hand walk over desolate street.
With steady steps one goes, and calm and veiled;
The other's knees upon the road have failed;
Bruiséd she lags and weeps, her cheek has paled.

VI

O Death, thy steps are slow, but they count full.
Who thought thee blind and inexorable?
Who ever said that thou, implacable,
And drunk with blood, a specter roamed to strike,
And sweep at random, grain of sand most like,
The temples, deserts, fields, and town and dike.

VII

Thou knowest how to choose upon this earth;
'Tis true, to error oft thou givest birth;
Thy hand is not so sure; it is thy worth
To humor some who would thee darkly please,
To spare the madman, prop the impostor's knees,
Let vice grow gray, and sorrow starve and freeze.

VIII

But when the noble child of royal race
Flies from the sloth antique of royal place,
Seeks in the studio truth in art to trace,
Creates in dream the fair ideal shape,
With maiden hand doth ope the stone agape,
To let the beauty, let the life escape;

IX

And when this lovely sprite of genius pure—
Her name was Marie, name of sweetest lure—
Over her cherished work doth bend demure,
To paint Jeanne when questioning her heart,
The village child who healed her country's smart
Lends her her piety and modest art;

X

Then noble hands with ardent labor tired,
No time for rest, but time for prayer required;
Those hands so rich in alms, with visions fired,

Those hands which bitter tears have wiped away,
With sudden shiver, still and icy lay.
From Pisa moves the coffin day by day.

XI

Her brother dead last year, what had he done?
What good to kill—why on that bier a son,
A young man dying, followed by his sire?
What heart so cold on earth, devoid of fire,
As not to shudder, not in silence pause
Before this crime, of chance without a cause?

XII

What had he done but come and follow fate
With us in school, his spirit cultivate,
Reflect with us, with us both work and play,
His rank assume beneath the sun of day,
In greatness of the heart alone arrayed,
And, since he was a prince, acquire his trade?

XIII

What had he done but love, and seek to see
What God has done in his great goodness free,
That which already pales in our ennui,
Country, and honor, words to love we seem?
He knew, and gave the poor his pity's gleam,
Love to the bravest, to the pure esteem.

XIV

What had he done but what he was to do?
When cannon growled, he waved the banner too;
When France would sleep, unto the camps he flew;
The memory thereof would come, perhaps, with time;
For many times his thought frontiers would climb,
While listening drums that beat the marching chime.

XV

Him what could calumny itself reproach?
More cruel blow can ne'er again encroach.
If not regret, who did not give respect?
Go ask the crowd with hate and envy decked.
No stain upon his brow or on his fame;
No man hath left behind a purer name.

XVI

A party man to triumph or to ruin run,
What foe of father dares to hate the son?
Who could to such a tomb an insult call?
A ball, they say, in times of Charles the Tenth,
Upon the throne steps he did stop at length;
Then, since he falls, we let him sleep in strength.

XVII

Ah, thus to die, poor prince, at thirty years!
No word from wife, without his mother's tears,
And clasping no one in his arms that throb!
No agony of death, no parting sob!
God only in his heart could read the prayer
Which angels teach to those who dying are.

XVIII

May God, who hears, me from blaspheming keep!
I do not like this fate so foul and deep,
Which breaks a diadem against a stone,
Because a driver's hand too weak has grown.
O ye, who pass beside that fatal brink,
Look to your steps, and on your loved ones think!

XIX

He liked our pleasures, troubles made him sad;
Of that old book where count of time he had,
His hand with ours had turned many a page.
He lived with us, he was of our own age.
His youthful thought with ancient courage ran;
A king of France to be, he was the man.

XX

I think, and say to all who will believe,
No courtier I, nor would that grief deceive,
But empty is a place in history.

A century was there, and a glory,
In this stanch man with sister by his side,
A lovely head with fearless heart to guide.

XXI

It had been great, the day when his sword stood
Retempered, washed and bright in strangers'
blood,
Had to his native country brought her pride;
The while the child with art preoccupied,
Keeping upon the threshold charity,
Could make the Muse come in with liberty.

XXII

Nemours, Aumale, Joinville to battle call!
Glorious that shout along our city wall
The people hear, the ramparts they repeat;
While in the chapel, praying calm and sweet,
Though pale, her eyes with gentle brightness
shine,
The sister calleth down bounty divine.

XXIII

It had been fine, that youth and life so strong,
So warmly loved and waited for so long,
Awaking thus in our mother country.
I speak of it by chance, because I see;
Some one may weep him, having better known,
His wife and friend, and now his widow lone.

XXIV

Poor prince! In his last moment what a dream!
An hour (how long to Time doth one hour seem?)—
An hour a century with wo could mar!
He was departing, almost for the war.
Father he was, and son; one hour was his;
He would his mother and the children kiss.

XXV

'Twas then that death his noble victim sought;
Death spared him on the desert burning hot,
Where Arabs fly, with stealthy step and slow,
About our soldiers whom the fevers mow,
And creep with bloody sword the bush within.
Once more to Neuilly, this was all his sin.

XXVI

Neuilly! Oh, charming home and memory sweet!
Childish illusions, ah, ye come and fleet!
When by the portal in those alleys green
We children saw the smiling, watchful queen,
Who then could think we must one day return,
To find the veiléd head, to see death's urn?

XXVII

What plans we made at that young age naïve,
When all things speak, and heart doth not deceive!

When with such force hath man so much of hope?
Innocent valor, bold with all to cope!
The hour might come, the moment might entrance,
And we were proud and wild: we had our France.

XXVIII

Strange dream! Death came, and all has fallen asleep.
How can a hope so just and fair and deep
Become an useless or a cruel thing?
Last year he died, no funeral hymn we sing:
Where stood that blood-stained shop, a chapel stands.
The rest? What age is in oblivion's hands?

XXIX

He did not die alone when going to Neuilly.
Of nine of us who marched in company,
How many are dead! Albert, so brave and free,
Mortemart, and thou, brave Laborderie,
Who madest haste to love, this life to know,
The best of all of us, and first to go!

XXX

If grief could live, your names would famous be,
O friends! May that sad, gloomy deity,

Whose fires weak light to our time faintly lend,
To you the funeral torches brightness send!
And forlorn hope, of this a somber age,
We must beware in this dark fight we wage;

XXXI

For France, just now the mistress of the world,
Has been struck down and backward hurled,
And, like Juliet, beneath the arches dark,
In part awake, in part of death the mark,
With staggering step, in rugged purple's folds,
Among the tombs her random march she holds.

July, 1843.

THE NIGHT OF MAY

THE MUSE

Come, take thy lute and kiss me, poet mine.
The breezes' breath grows warmer, and to-night
Is born the Spring and buds the eglantine;
Among the tender blossoms perching light,
The birds are waiting for the dawn to shine.
Come, take thy lute and kiss me, poet mine.

THE POET

How dark it is in yonder dale!
I thought I saw, with windy veil,
A phantom cross the forest weird;
From out the field it seemed to pass,
Its foot scarce touched the daisied grass;
A wondrous reverie it was
That faded fast and disappeared.

THE MUSE

Come, take thy lute! Night in her fragrant veil
Rocks o'er the sward the dreamy winds to rest;
The modest rose draws close her petals pale
About the bee, with too much sweet oppressed.

List, all is mute: what night for love is this!
Beyond the lindens dark, day's parting kiss
A deeper blush on heaven's cheek hath thrown—
All nature blooms again, and every place
Is like two happy lovers' first embrace,
Full of sweet fragrance, love, and gentle moan.

THE POET

Why beatest thou so quick, my heart?
Something I feel within me start
And fill me with a strange affright.
Is some one knocking at my door?
My fitful lamp scarce flickers more.
Why am I dazzled by its light?
My limbs all tremble; woe is me!
Who comes? who calls?—No, all is well:
'Twas but the tolling midnight bell.
O solitude! O poverty!

THE MUSE

Come, take thy lute: the wine of young desire
Makes riot in immortal veins to-night;
The fev'rous winds have set my lips on fire,
And heaviness doth wrestle with delight.
Ah! thriftless boy, look at me—I am fair.
It cannot be thou hast forgot the day
When first with my wings' touch I soothed thy care

And from thy pale cheek kissed the tears away?
Dying of love in love's first youth wast thou;
I was thy solace in that bitter sorrow;
So be thou mine; I die of longing now,
And needs must pray if I would see the morrow.

THE POET

Is the voice that calls me thine?
Hapless spirit, is it thou?
O my blossom, goddess mine,
Only thy true heart divine
Unpolluted loves me now.
Ay, 'tis thou, forever fair,
Thou my sister and my queen;
For I feel, through night's chill air,
Golden garments thou dost wear
Flood my bosom with their sheen.

THE MUSE

Come, take thy lute: in sad and songless mood
Thy balmy vigil did I see thee keeping,
And like a sparrow to her twittering brood,
From heaven's height I hasten to thy weeping.
Ah! thou dost suffer, friend. Some stifled pang
Lies restless in thy heart with grief unspent,
Since love, like mortal love, within it sprang,
A counterfeit of joy, a shadow of content.
Sing as to God; sing thine unuttered thought
Of pleasure that is past and sorrow that is nought.

Part in a kiss for some untrodden shore,
While the chance echoes of thy life we waken,
And tell thy glory, bliss and madness o'er,
Dreaming the wingèd dream first overtaken.
Come, seek some spot secluded utterly;
We are alone, the world is at our feet—
Green Caledon and sunburnt Italy;
My mother, Greece, where honey is so sweet;
Argos, and Pteleon's smoking hecatomb,
And hallowed Messa, doves' delicious home;
The shaggy front of changeful Pelion,
And that calm bay, the mirror of the swan,
Into which silver-sounding rivers sweep,
Reflecting cities in their azure deep.
So may our singing lull a golden dream;
But what enchanted pain shall be that singing's
theme?
Some pensive seraph, at the break of dawn,
Did haply bending over thee appear,
And shaking lilacs in his robe of lawn
Whispered the loves he dreamt of in thine ear.
Come, shall we sing of hope, or joy, or woe?
The mailèd legions shall we bathe in gore?
Or to the winds the foam of coursers throw?
Or tell how silken ladders lovers bore?
Or shall we sing what hand doth night and day
Light the unnumbered lamps that shine above
With holy oil of life and of eternal love?
Or cry to Tarquin, "It is time, away!"
Or drive the goats to nip the bitter tree,

Or dive for pearls beneath the bitter sea,
Or unto melancholy show the sky;
Or up the mountain chase the hunter's pack,
And see the roe that pleads with piteous cry—
Her newborn young, her pastures call her back;
But as she falls, the hunter in his rage
Casts her poor heart still beating to his hound.
Or shall we paint a red-cheeked maiden bound
To mass, and followed by a tripping page?
She by her mother's side, with absent air,
Upon her parted lips forgets her prayer,
For in the pillar's echo she can hear
The tinkling spur of some bold cavalier.
Or shall we bid the chivalry of France
With buckled armor mount their castle walls,
And let the prowess sung in quaint romance
By gentle minstrels echo in their halls?
Shall he of Waterloo relate his life
And count the victims slaughtered by his knife,
Till, on his hillock by the wing oppressed
Of the swift angel of eternal night,
He crossed his hands upon his iron breast?
Or shall we dress soft elegies in white?
Or shall the scathing rhyme the shame relate
Of some pale wretch's merchantable name,
Who, pinched by hunger, from his lurkings came,
And shivering with impotence and hate,
The hopes of genius on its brow profaned
And bit the laurels that his breath had stained?
Take thy lute, take thy lute: I cannot wait.

My wing will on the breath of spring upbear me
The laden breezes from the earth will tear me.
A tear from thee; God hearkens; it is late.

THE POET

If thou wishest, sister dear,
From my friendly eye a tear,
From my loving lips a kiss,
Gladly, love, they will be given
To remind thee of our bliss
When again thou art in heaven.
But of hope I cannot sing,
Nor of happiness nor glory,
Nor, alas! of suffering:
Dumb the lips are, listening
To the heart's unuttered story.

THE MUSE

Dost thou, then, liken me to autumn's blast
That dries on graves the tears that sorrow drew,
Since grief to him is but a drop of dew?
Poet, that kiss, I give it thee at last.
Thy leisure is the blossom I would fain
Have gathered here; to God belongs thy pain.
Whatever be thy youth's unhappy fate,
Oh! let it ever deepen in thy heart,
That sacred wound made by a seraph's dart.
As nought else can, great sorrow makes us great.

But think not, poet, that since grief is come,
Thy voice on earth must be forever dumb;
The sweetest song with wildest sorrow throbs
And mortal music is but woven sobs.
When late the pelican, his weary journey o'er,
Flies to his rushes with the flight of day,
Seeing him beat the waters far away,
His famished brood run eager to the shore
Thinking already to divide the prey,
And, open-mouthed, around their father flock,
Shaking their shapeless necks with joyous cries.
He, gaining with slow steps a lofty rock,
With drooping wing makes shelter for his brood,
And, melancholy fisher, scans the skies.
Nought but his heart he bringeth them for food;
In vain he searched the watery depths and wide,
For ocean was a waste and earth a solitude.
Sombre and silent, stretched upon a stone,
He bares a father's bosom to his own,
With love that lulls the suffering he feels;
He totters to his feast of death and reels,
As from his breast the bloody milk they draw,
Drunken with pleasure, tenderness and awe.
But sometimes, 'mid that blessed agony,
When, waiting long for death long lingering,
He dreads his young may leave him ere he die,
He starts, and spreading to the night his wing,
Strikes his bare bosom. Then a savage cry
Rends with so woeful an adieu the air,
The seabirds from the haunted beaches fly,

And the lone traveller belated there
Feels death pass by, and says a hurried prayer.
Thus, poet, poets do: they let the man
Who lives but for a day make merry then,
But in their feasts they, like the pelican,
On their dear heart's blood feed their fellow-men.
When thus they speak of broken hopes deplored,
Of sadness and oblivion, love and pain,
The sinking heart grows weary at the strain.
Their wordy passion is a flashing sword
That traces dazzling circles in the air,
And yet a drop of blood is ever clinging there.

THE POET

Muse, enough! Too grievous grows
Thine insatiable demand;
Men write nothing on the sand
When the cruel northwind blows.
I have known another spring
When my youth was like a bird,
Ready ceaselessly to sing;
But if now mine anguish spake,
If these throbbing strings were stirred
To my sorrow's gentlest word,
Like a reed the lyre would break.

THE AUGUST NIGHT

THE MUSE

Since the majestic sun, in his wide round,
Has passed through Cancer on his burning way,
All joy has left me, and, in silence bound,
I wait till my beloved shall summon me.
I find no trace of the glad days of yore.
Alas, 'tis long since he has left his home!
Alone, wrapped in my veil, I come once more,
And lean my hot brow on his open door,
Sad as a widow at her infant's tomb.

THE POET

Welcome, my true and faithful friend!
Welcome, my glory and my love!
The best and dearest in the end
Is she who waits us while we rove.
Though selfish thoughts sometimes immerse
My soul, and bear me far from thee,
I come, my mother and my nurse,
To thee my sorrows to rehearse.
I come! Open thy arms to me!

THE MUSE

Oh, hungry heart, weary with hope deferred,
Why dost thy rove so oft, and stay so late?
What seekest thou but some unhappy fate?
And what but suffering is thy reward?
What art thou doing while I wait thee here?
Thou followest in the night a meteor pale;
These earthly joys will leave thee, when they fail,
Naught but weak pity for our love sincere.
I find thy study vacant when I come;
Thoughtful, upon the balcony I wait,
Gazing upon thy garden and thy home,
Whilst thou art brooding on thy evil fate.
Some haughty beauty holds thee in her power,
And thou dost quite neglect this little flower,
Whose smallest spray, in happier days gone by,
Was watered with warm tears dropped from thine eye.
This withered vervain is my symbol meet;
Oh, friend, of thy neglect we both shall die,
And, like a bird on wing, its perfume, sweet
With my remembrance, up to heaven shall fly.

THE POET

As through the field at evening's close
I passed, I saw along the walk
A blossom of sweet-briar rose,
Faded, and trembling on its stalk;

And waving lightly in the air,
Beside the rose a rosebud grew,
Sweet promise of a future flower;
The younger was the fairer far—
Just so does man his life renew.

THE MUSE

Always a man, alas! always in tears!
In sweat and dust to toil for evermore;
Always at war, a prey to dreadful fears.
Disguise is vain: the wound is at the core.
Life is the same in every clime and land,
Desire, regret, and greetings and farewells;
The players and the play are still unchanged.
In everything by mortal cunning planned
The skeleton beneath the truth reveals.
Alas! my poet, why art thou so mute?
Hushed is thy song, and silent now thy lute;
In a vain, fickle dream thy heart is lost.
Dost thou not know this love on woman spent,
Squanders the treasures Heaven thy soul has lent?
Of tears, more than of blood, God counts the cost.

THE POET

As through the vale I came at morn,
A bird was singing on her nest;
Her little ones, her latest born,
Had died beneath her hovering breast;

And yet she sang her sweetest strains.
Dear Muse, O, do not sorrow so,
When all is lost, God yet remains—
God there above, hope here below.

THE MUSE

What wilt thou find, when sad and lone thou must
Unto thy father's house thy steps retrace,
With trembling hands to wipe away the dust
From this neglected and forgotten place?
How canst thou bear to enter thy abode
In search of rest and hospitality,
When every hour a voice will cry aloud:
"What hast thou done with life and liberty?"
Thou wouldst forget; will wishing teach the art?
To find thyself dost thou but need to seek?
Which is the poet, pray, thou or thy heart?
Ah! 'tis thy heart, and thy heart will not speak.
Love will destroy it; passions strong and wild
In their fierce grasp will harden it to stone,
And thou shalt feel their remnants sin-defiled,
Writhing like serpents after life is gone.
Alas! Heaven help thee! What can I avail,
When God forbids that I should love thee more,
And when, on golden wings, trembling and pale,
To save myself from thee, to Him I soar?
Poor child! no danger menaced our pure loves,
When lost in thought, in Auteuil's shady groves,
Under the chestnut trees and poplars gray,
I lured thee on, through many a winding way.

I was young then, a nymph; from their abode
In the birch trees, peeped forth the Dryads fair,
And, as we walked, the tears that softly flowed,
Dropped, pure as gold, into the waters clear.
What hast thou done, love, with thy youthful days?
Who plucked the fruit from thy enchanted bower?
The rose upon thy cheek made glad the gaze
Of the great goddess who brings health and power.
But now thy foolish tears have paled it quite;
Beauty and virtue both are gone astray;
And when the angry gods rise in their might,
To take from me, beloved, thy genius bright,
If I descend from Heaven, what wilt thou say?

THE POET

As the bird in the grove flutters and sweetly sings
On the bough where her eggs lie broken in the nest;
As the flower of the field, a bud when morning springs,
Seeing the full-blown flower dropped on earth's green breast,
Droops and softly falls, when the sun is in the west;

As in the forest depths, under the arching green
We walk, and hear the dead wood crack along
our way;
As nature stamps this truth on every changing
scene,
And science has but this one word to man to say,
That naught endures, all is renewed, all fades
away;

As e'en the solid rock is changed to dust at last;
As all things die at eve to live again at morn;
As war and slaughter are but fertilizers vast;
As even from the sod above the tomb is born
The precious blade which yields the rich, abun-
dant corn;—

Oh, Muse, of what import is death or life to me?
I love, and I rejoice to pine and suffer pain;
I love, and for a kiss I'd barter poesy;
I love, and down my cheek I like to feel the rain
Of tender tears, I could not, if I would, restrain.

I love, I like to sing of joy and idleness;
Of every foolish hope and fear, and passing care;
I like to tell them o'er and o'er and then confess
That, after having vowed my mistress to for-
swear,
I now have sworn for love, both life and death
to bear.

Pluck out, before all else, thy vain, consuming
pride,
O thou who thinkest thy bitter heart will throb
no more!
Love, and renew thy life, let the flower open
wide;
For thou must bear again what thou hast borne
before—
After one once has loved, one loves forevermore.

THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER

THE POET

My griefs have vanished like a midnight dream;
All I remember of them I compare
To those light mists that rise at morning's gleam,
And, with the dewdrops, melt into the air.

THE MUSE

What grief was it, O Poet, tell,
That seared your heart up like a spell,
And parted our fond souls in twain?
Tho' deeply in your heart conceal'd,
Each accent and each glance reveal'd
The woes I've long time mourned in vain.

THE POET

It was a vulgar evil, and well known;
But oftentimes when we are sick at soul,
We think that we, of all the world alone,
Are crushed with misery beyond control.

THE MUSE

It cannot be a vulgar grief
That comes not from a vulgar mind;
But tell me all that lurks behind,
And give your aching heart relief.
Oh, trust me, and confess with truth
That Silence' God, in very sooth,
Is brother to the God of Death.
Telling our woes we ofttimes heal
The very ills that we reveal,
And mourn and cure them in a breath.

THE POET

If I must tell thee of my suffering,
I scarcely know what name it ought to bear,
Whether it rose from love, or was a thing
Of pride and folly and my own despair.
But now I will unfold my burning pain,
Since we are here, alone beside the fire,
If thou, dear Muse, wilt lull my racking brain,
As in my happier days, with thy loved lyre.

THE MUSE

Before you tell me your harsh fate
Drive cruel rancor far away;
For, Poet, you must speak to-day
Without a trace of love or hate.

If you remember long ago
You held me soother of your heart—
Then would you have me take a part
In passions which have wrought your woe?

THE POET

So well I conquered all this hideous strife,
That sometimes when I dream me of my ill,
In those same spots I risked my boyhood's life
A stranger takes the place I wont to fill.
Be fearless then, O Muse, and mark, that while
I tell my woes, there is no fond regret;
Sweet it is to weep, but sweeter still to smile
At the thoughts of woes we are able to forget.

THE MUSE

Like a watchful mother bending
O'er the cradle of her son,
So I rest, while you are blending
Future hopes with deeds misdone.
Speak, O Poet, and my lyre
Shall every trembling accent fire,
And lull you with its wonted lays,
Till, in a flood of silver light,
Like some vision gay and bright,
Fades all the gloom of bygone days.

THE POET

Loved nights of toil, of darling solitude,
O nights of toil when life sped fast—
To my old study, in my wonted mood,
Thank God! I have come back at last.
Tho' oft deserted, how I love each wall—
Each book upon the dusty shelves!
Remember, Muse, how it was all in all,
A universe for our two selves!
When to the careless scoffing world I told
The burning songs I heard from you.
Here, in my loved retreat, let me unfold
The cruel wrongs a girl could do—
A girl, the loveliest of all around me,
Breathing of all things save disaster,
And so I loved the yoke that bound me
Like a serf unto his master;
A yoke detested, for by that my youth
Grew older than the world can guess,
Yet near my mistress' charms I had in sooth
Some sunny days of happiness;
Some days when violet perfumes filled the air,
Some nights upon the silver sands;
Little I reck'd that the wan spectre Care
Gibed at me with his bony hands.
I see her still, beneath the bashful moon,
Her slim waist trembling in my arms—
Speak not of it—I did not guess how soon
Cruel Fate would rob me of her charms:

Perchance the gods were sicken'd at the sight
Of so much mortal happiness,
And rain'd upon me, in their fell despite,
An after-life of fierce distress.

THE MUSE

The memory of a bygone spell
Has flown upwards in your thought;
On the scar that it has wrought,
Wherefore shouldst thou fear to dwell?
Tell thy tale without a smart,
And renew thy happy days;
If Fortune broke a trusting heart,
Take at least a nobler part,
And laugh at youthful folly's ways!

THE POET

Nay, at my misery rather let me laugh,
And let me tell thee, Muse, without one sob,
What bitter draughts of half-dream'd dreams I quaff,
Since I aroused from passion's burning throb.
It was, I mind me, a drear winter night,
Sad and so cold, unlike a night like this,
The murmur of the breeze now breathing light,
Now pouring down the whole street with a hiss;
And at my window waiting her I stayed,
Hanging upon each footfall in the dark,
When all at once I felt my soul betray'd,
And my whole body froze up stiff and stark.

Still was the busy city's noisy roar,
And naught but torch-lit shadows flitted by;
The very wind, through the half-opened door,
Breath'd like a sicken'd mortal's dreary sigh,
And found a hollow echo in my breast;
And city clocks rang out their mocking chimes
Of hours that told of eager sleepless rest
And swift love dalliance of other times:
She came not, and with throbbing, dizzy head,
And eager brows, press'd 'gainst the window pane,
I cannot tell what burning words I said,
Or what wild thoughts came crashing through my brain;
I only loved her, but to live a day
Without her seem'd a torture worse than death.
I—who was envious of the soft wind's play,
Because it robb'd me of her balmy breath—
I felt as tho' I were a thing accurst,
And mad with too much loving, that I could
Couple for one short moment all that's worst
Of loathsome crime to her sweet womanhood;
Then, with a maddening effort of the will,
I rent the veil, and found truth grim and stark,
Then almost wished that I had left it still,
And gone on loving blindly in the dark.
For then I saw, through all their love disguise,
The snaring beauties that had wrought my woe,
And viewed her thralling charms with other eyes
Than those I gazed with half a day ago.

And day dawned wearily, for I had stole
Upon the balcony, and tried to freeze
With cold, cold limbs the fever of my soul,
Till my heart's blood seemed ebbing to the lees;
Now all at once I hear the fall of feet,
Making the dreary silence still more drear,
Until my eye can pierce the gloomy street,
To see her come, and feel that she is here.
What wouldst thou, perfidious wretch, reply?
Where hast thou been? In whose bed hast thou slept—
Thou, and thy charms, and every charm a lie,
Whilst I have waited for thee, watched and wept?
Art thou invested by some hideous drouth
Of loathsome love, and lust in every vein,
That thou couldst kiss me with thy reeking mouth,
And twine me in thy wearied arms again?
Begone, thou spectre of my mistress' truth!
Affrighted to thy tomb by morning's gleam;
Let me at least forget my poisoned youth,
And when I think of thee, believe I dream!

THE MUSE

Calm thy aching soul, I pray,
Of thoughts fraught with such dreams to you;
Drive these memories far away,
Or else your wound will bleed anew.

A wound like this is very deep,
No misery can e'er efface it;
Rise boldly to the ill you weep,
And sternly from your memory chase it,
Until all thought of her is o'er—
Of her, whose name I'll breathe no more.

THE POET

Shame to thee, who taught me first
The world of woe that lies in treason!
Who rendered all my life accurst,
To please thy fancy for a season!
Shame to thee! Thy cruel eyes
Played their hateful task too well,
Raising my soul unto the skies,
To dash it back again to hell!
It was thy face, it was thy smile,
And those loving, luring glances,
That taught my boyhood to revile
All a fond boyhood's wild romances!
It was thy charms, thy youthful years,
That turn'd my happy youth to pain,
And made me doubt the force of tears,
Because I wept, and wept in vain!
Shame to thee, for I was still
As guileless as a babe unborn!
My heart, beneath thy mystic thrill,
Opened like some ripe bud at dawn!

And if this simple guileless heart
Were ready for the touch of woe,
It had been, perhaps, the better part,
Unsear'd, unscath'd, to let it go!
Shame to thee! Of all my grief
Thou wert the foster-nurse—nay, mother;
'Tis vainly now I seek relief,
And vainly try my tears to smother!
But tears will flow, thou mayst be sure,
As long as there are tears to stream;
For such a wound there is no cure,
For such a grief no dawning's gleam.
Still, in this flood of passionate tears
I'll wash away all thought of thee,
And pray that in the coming years
All memory of thee cease to be!

THE MUSE

Come, Poet, cease, when, near some faithless one,
For a short day thy fond illusion last;
Do not outrage that day when it is done,
If you would still be loved, respect the past;
And if for human weakness 'tis too great
To pardon all the burnings of regret,
Oh, spare thyself at least the scourge of hate,
Tho' thou canst not forgive, thou canst forget.
The dead are sleeping in the earth's still womb,
So stifled memories sleep in ev'ry breast,

For the heart's reliques have a hallowed tomb,
And no rude hand should dare to mar their rest;
These broken dreams, these withered hopes were sent
To mould true men to living a true life,
Never a chastening blow but what is meant
To bring sweet calm and peace on weary strife.
Man is an apprentice, and deep grief
A harsh task-master unto all below,
And till his time be served, tho' hard 'tis brief,
No man can know himself as he should know.
'Tis a harsh law, but old as time and thought,
It ever has been, and shall ever be,
That all things at this sad price must be bought,
That man must be baptized in misery!
The sweet green blades would have no golden ears
Without the morning dew, nor buds their flowers,
So life itself is fed, and nursed by tears,
Life's path is strewed with roses steeped in showers.
O surely now thou art weaned from thy madness,
For thou art young, and welcomed everywhere;
Of those bright joys that change life into gladness,
Fate has rained down upon thee, and to spare;
And when, at eve, beneath the linden trees,
Thou drink'st with some old friend to times gone by,

Would the mere thought of such sweet mem'ries
please
Had they been purchased at a price less high?
Couldst thou love flowers, and the wind's soft
glee,
And Petrarch's sonnets, and the birds' wild
strain,
Nature and Shakespeare, art and poesy,
Unless they told thee of some former pain?
The stars' vast harmony, the night's still quiet,
When breezes whisper and the river flows,
Would tell thee naught unless some feverish riot
Had made thee yearn for infinite repose.
Now that thou hast a mistress fair as truth,
When she embraces thee for a last good-night,
Do not the distant memories of thy youth
Make soft smiles still more soft, bright eyes more
bright?
Unmindful of the past, when ye twain dare
Walk the same woodlands, the same silver sands,
Now nevermore shall the wan spectre Care
Point out the road with bony, gibing hands.
Now once again beneath the bashful moon
Thy darling clasps thee in her loving arms,
And fond hearts beat to the same loving tune,
More true, perhaps, than the old, with all the
old one's charms.
Why then complain while hope immortal springs
From the mere glance of cold misfortune's gaze?

And why detest the thoughts your boyhood brings,
When misery did but lead to better days?
O Poet, pity rather her who caused
Thy weary nights, thy sobbings of distress,
Who chased the phantom pleasure, and who paused
'Mid suffering to dream of happiness.
Her lot was painful; perhaps she loved thee, while,
The tool of Fate, she broke thy trusting heart,
And womanlike, perchance her parting smile
Did but conceal the grief she felt to part.
Oh, pity her—her love was like a dream;
She dealt the blow, but could not stay its force,
Amid thy tears things are not what they seem,
And love, true love remains, when all has run its course.

THE POET

Hate is impious, as you say;
With a cold shudder should one start
When this vile reptile gnaws his way,
And coils himself about one's heart.
Then listen to me, goddess mine,
Be witness to my oaths divine!
By my mistress' soft blue eyes;
By the deep azure of the skies;
And by that brilliant sparkling flame

That from great Venus takes its name,
Glittering like some trembling pearl
On the horizon's starry whirl;
By Nature's myriad worlds above,
And by the great Creator's love;
By that soft, pure and tranquil light
That guides the traveller through the night;
By grass and turf, and flowers and thyme,
And forests rich with summertime;
By life and all its smiles and tears,
The harvest, and the fruit of years;—
By all these oaths I firmly vow
This mad love shall no longer last,
From my life's volume mark me, now,
Tear out this sad page of the past!
And thou, who wished that fond regret
Should gnaw my heart out while I live,
Learn that when once I can forget,
In that same moment I forgive.
I *do* forgive, and now, my dear,
Let's break the chain that bound us two,
And with a last, a parting tear,
Receive a parting, last adieu!

And now come in a merry throng,
Joyous glees and roundelays!
Ah, sing me, Muse, some loving song,
Like those sweet songs of other days.
Already the sweet flowers and grass
Echo the footsteps of the dawn;

Wake, my true love, and as you pass,
Gather the pearl-strewn flowers of morn.
All Nature's blooming everywhere,
Now that the gloomy hours have run;
So let us be reborn with her,
In the first glances of the sun!

THE DECEMBER NIGHT

THE POET

A SCHOOLBOY, I my vigils kept
One night, while my companion slept;
Into the lonely room forlorn
There came and sat a little lad,
Poor, and in sombre garments clad,
As like me as my brother born.

His countenance was sweet and grave,
And by the light my candle gave
He came and read my open book.
Upon my hand his brow he leant,
And stayed until the night was spent,
Smiling, yet with a pensive look.

A thoughtful youth, in dreamy mood,
I strolled sometimes within a wood;
As o'er the heath I paced one morn,
Beneath a tree, upon the ground,
A young man clothed in black I found,
As like me as my brother born.

I asked him to point out my way;
In his right hand he held a spray
Of eglantine, the left hand bore

A lute. A friendly bow he gave,
Half turned, and with a gracious wave,
He pointed to the hill before.

A youth who still in love believed,
I mourned one day my love deceived.
My trusting heart with anguish torn;
There sat beside me, still and sad,
A stranger in black garments clad.
As like me as my brother born.

With anxious brow and mournful eyes,
One hand he lifted to the skies,
From one a flashing sword did gleam;
But though he seemed to share my grief,
He said no word for my relief,
But sighed, and vanished like a dream.

A gay gallant, at festal board,
When toasts went round and wine was poured,
I sat, and raised my glass in turn;
Before my face appeared, alack!
A guest arrayed in solemn black,
As like me as my brother born.

Hidden beneath his sable cloak,
A tattered purple rag he stroke;
A withered wreath his forehead spanned;
He stretched his bony arm to mine,

And as he touched my glass of wine,
It shivered in my nerveless hand.

One night, when one year more had sped,
Beside my father's dying bed
I knelt, and wept my state forlorn;
There sat the while, above the dead,
A black-robed orphan at the head,
As like me as my brother born.

His tender eyes in tears were drowned;
With crown of thorns his brow was bound
(As sorrowing angels are portrayed);
His breast was piercéd with his sword;
His purple robe seemed dyed with blood;
His lute upon the ground was laid.

So deeply was my mind impressed,
I've never failed to know my guest
At every step of my career;
'Tis a strange vision, I confess;
But, friend or angel, none the less,
This friendly shade did still appear.

Weary at length of pain and grief,
And longing only for relief,
To die or to be born again,
I bade adieu to France, and went,
Now here, now there, in discontent,
Seeking some trace of hope, in vain.

At Pisa, 'neath the Appenine,
At Cologne, fronting on the Rhine,
At Nice, 'neath the hillside steep,
At Florence, in grand palace-halls,
At Brieg, within the châlet's walls,
Or midst the Alpine silence deep;

At Genoa, 'neath citron trees,
At Havre, by Atlantic seas,
In Vevay's verdant orchard-shade,
At Venice, by sad Lido's graves,
Where the pale Adriatic waves
Moisten the turf above them laid:

Wherever, under arching skies,
With weary soul and weary eyes,
I bore about my bleeding heart;
Wherever hideous Ennui,
Dragging my weariness with me,
Drew me as on a hurdle-cart;

Wherever, thirsting to be shown
The wonders of a world unknown,
My fleeting dreams I sought to chase;
Wherever I beheld once more
What I had seen and known before,
The falseness of the human face;

Wherever on the weary road
My head upon my hands I bowed,

And woman-like sobbed for relief;
Wherever, like the sheep unshorn,
That leaves its wool upon the thorn,
My soul left traces of her grief;

Whene'er in sleep I closed my eye,
Whenever I wished but to die,
Whichever way my steps did turn,
There always came across my track
A mournful being clothed in black,
As like me as my brother born.

Who art thou then that, soon or late,
I always see upon my way?
Thou canst not be my evil fate,
Thy melancholy tells me nay;
There's too much patience in thy smile,
There's too much pity in thy tears;
Thy grief my sorrow can beguile,
It draws me nearer heaven awhile,
Almost like gentle Friendship it appears.

Nor my good angel canst thou be,
For thou dost never come to warn;
My woes thou failest not to see,
I suffer, and thou lookest on;
For twenty years before my eyes,
And yet thy name I do not know;
Thou dost not share the joy I prize,
Nor cure the grief that on me lies;
If God hast sent thee, why not tell me so?

This very night thou cam'st again;
A night it was of storm and cloud,
The wind against my window pane
Beat with its wings; alone, and bowed,
Upon my bed I sat, and turned
On a dear spot my gaze intent,
Where late a precious kiss had burned.
I dreamed like a fond woman spurned,
Feeling as if my life were slowly rent.

I gathered up the locks of hair,
The letters, the remains of love;
The past was sounding in my ear
Its solemn vows, that fleeting prove.
I looked upon the sacred things,
I touched them with a trembling hand;
Tears, from the heart's deep hidden springs,
Drunk by the heart which anguish wrings,
Tears, he who sheds them cannot understand.

Relics of happy days gone by,
I wrapped them up with tender care:
Nought lasts upon the earth, said I,
But just a lock of woman's hair;
Lost in oblivion profound,
Like divers in the deepest sea,
I sounded all the depths around;
Alone, and all unseen, I mourned
My buried love, forever lost to me.

I was about to put a seal
Upon these treasures, frail but dear;
But, weeping, I began to feel
Anew my former doubt and fear;
O woman, weak, and vain and proud,
In vain thou seekest to forget!
Why lie to one's own soul? O God!
These tears, these sighs, what do they bode,
These sobs, if 'tis not that thou lovest yet?

Yes, thou shalt suffer, thou shalt weep,
And count the hours that I am gone;
But this vain dream is ours to keep.
Farewell! The secret is our own.
Go! go! and bear your pride away,
Shut up within your icy breast;
I feel my heart still young and gay,
And brave to bear for many a day
Far greater ills than this in tears confessed.

Go! go! great Nature did not shower
All her good gifts upon your mind.
Poor child! content with beauty's power,
And knowing not how to be kind.
Go! go! pursue your destiny;
Who loses you has not lost all.
Fling to the winds that wander by,
The ashes of our love—oh, why,
If thou must leave me, hast thou loved at all?

But in the dark night, suddenly
Across my curtain flits a shade;
I see a form glide noiselessly,
It comes and sits upon my bed.
Who art thou then, so pale and grave,
Grim presence clothed in solemn black?
Sad bird of passage, what wouldst have?
Art thou a dream or do I rave,
Or does the mirror my own shape give back?

Who art thou, spectre of my youth?
Pilgrim whom nothing tires, alas!
Why do I find thee still, forsooth,
Within the shadow where I pass?
Who art thou, solitary guest,
Devoted friend in every woe?
Oh, tell me, pray, at whose behest
My wandering steps thou followest?
Who art thou, brother mine, I long to know?

THE VISION

My friend, one father have we both;
No guardian angel I, in truth,
Nor yet the evil fate of men.
Those whom I love, I never know
Along what path their steps may go,
In this earth's dreary little fen.

I am no god, nor demon quite,
And you entitled me aright,
When you the name of brother gave;
Where'er you wander, there shall I,
And when your time has come to die
I'll come and sit upon your grave.

Heaven has entrusted me your heart,
When you have trouble to impart
Seek me without disquietude.
I'll follow you along your way;
But touch your hand I never may.
My friend—my name is Solitude.

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